From Brian Wieher at

How many backpacks were distributed in SY2019/20? *So far this school year we’ve distributed 20,333 food bags to SLPS. This is including our SLPS COVID-19 response.*

How are the schools selected? *Schools interested in participating in our Operation Backpack Program are selected based on multiple factors: ability to pick up (may be done by volunteers), store, and hand out the food on a weekly basis- identify students with the highest need and distribute, collect, and manage enrollment forms. We are always open to feedback from the district on schools that they would like to have participate in our program.*

*However, we do not add any new partners without first conducting an in-person interview with the principal and person(s) who will be carrying out the program. This gives us the opportunity to ensure that principals are on board, there is a plan in place, and there is a secure location where the bags can be stored off the ground until they are handed out on Fridays.*

How do you measure the outcomes of the program? *We use qualitative data to measure program outcomes. At the end of each year, we survey the coordinators who carry out the program and meet with students from select schools to get anecdotal responses on how we are doing/ how the program is beneficial/ nonbeneficial or what could be improved.*

Will you increase the schools in 2020-21? *Operation Backpack is entirely funded by donors, so we will not be adding any new school partners next year. Our focus is always on our current schools and ensuring that we have enough resources for them before adding new partners.*

Are the Nutrition Education programs offered afterschool?

*Yes. All classes are currently offered through a partnership with ARCHS and with Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities.*

What type of classes are being offered: hand-on ......(Name some of the lessons)

*Hands on. Utilizing Operation Food Search’s program called Operation CHEF.*

*Operation CHEF (Building Culinary Habits to Empower Families) is a six-week nutrition-focused cooking course that teaches kids and teens fundamental culinary skills through hands-on lessons. With a class size of up to 12 participants, the course meets for up to two hours once a week for six weeks and is taught by one of Operation Food Search’s trained nutrition professionals and at least one trained volunteer. Nutrition education is incorporated into every recipe, discussion, and cooking lesson. The afterschool program covers topics such as eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, increasing whole grain intake, and understanding MyPlate.  Through the use of hands-on and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) focused educational activities, the students have fun while learning about cooking and nutrition. Operation CHEF is currently open to kids (ages 8-12) and teens (ages 13-18) who are encouraged to share what they learn with their entire family.*

Do the students have to get permission to participate in the Backpack program? *All students interested in participating in Operation Backpack must sign an enrollment form. Our enrollment forms allow for parents/guardians to add multiple children attending the same school to one enrollment form.*

How many interviews were conducted? *Interviews are conducted with a varying number of students at each school. We typically ask for a minimum of 3 students. We go to at least one school within each of our partnering school districts. This year, we visited Shenandoah Elementary.*

What was the total number of students that participated in the interviews? *There were at least 5 students who participated in our students interviews at Shenandoah.*

Were there five students per school? *Yes*

What was the feedback from the interviews? *Students tend to be very honest in their feedback on their likes/dislikes of the food. We hear a lot of love for the snacks, breakfast items, fruit, and certain entrees. Oftentimes, the menu items that students like are consumed that weekend. Vegetables tend to be the item that students are less enthusiastic about. Many students will tell us that they don’t always eat the vegetables each weekend, but their parent/ guardian will save them and use them later. We ask about level of trust in the kitchen- ex: are you allowed to use the microwave/ stove? Do you have a can opener? Can you use it? As you would imagine, these answers vary among the 3,000+ students that we serve each weekend. These responses help us to determine if certain menu items are useful or not and how frequently we should use them. Additionally, the students feedback helps us to eliminate certain items from our menus and come up with new items.*

How many teachers and how many principals participated in the survey process? *Our survey is blind, so we cannot see who/which schools have participated in the survey and who has not.*

how many surveys were emailed out? *We email our survey to all 10 of our SLPS partners and ask that they forward the survey to anyone else who helps carry out the program or works directly with students who receive the food bags.*

how many surveys were returned? *Our survey is blind, so we cannot see who/which schools have participated in the survey and who has not.*

What was the feedback from the surveys? *Here are a few of the questions/results from last year’s end of the year survey*





