



September 2018



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Hunger is a universal problem, which often seems too enormous to even attempt to solve. In our state many children routinely go hungry on the weekend and one in five children in the Salt Lake Valley are going home to no food. However, here close to home, one woman, recognized a need and began to resolve it, one child at a time.

Three years ago, when volunteering at the Murray Boys & Girls Club, Lynda Smart Brown discovered food missing from the pantry. She found kids stealing food items because of hunger and a lack of food at their homes on the weekends. Flooded with compassion, Lynda began to fill ten backpacks for those kids to take home on Friday afternoons. She packed each one with six easy and nutritional meal options and snacks for consumption over the weekend. Students were to return the backpacks on Monday for a refill at the end of the week.

This idea began with the help of five other people - not knowing where the food and support would come from week after week. Just knowing it had to work, **KidsEat!** was founded. Their belief that **"No Child Should Ever Go Hungry!"** became the motto of the new program.

Working from the basement of her home, Lynda admitted the beginning weeks were daunting. How would they collect enough items to fill the ten backpacks with everything they wanted to provide for each child? She said her friends and sorority sisters stepped up to assist and because of them **KidsEat!** became a success and began to thrive.

It soon became apparent that entire families were sharing the food she sent home. Today **KidsEat!** feeds between 250 to 300 people each week. In addition to the backpack program, the group provides meals for families and breakfast and snacks for the Boys & Girls daycare. They figure they supply approximately 3000 meals and snacks every week to at-risk children through the program.

Twenty committed volunteers work weekly to assemble backpacks and deliver them to the kids at the Murray Boys & Girls Club, Neighborhood House and several public schools. Funding comes from corporate donors, sponsors and individuals. Churches, businesses, families and organizations hold food-drives to help supply specific nutritional needs. Some groups fill the backpacks at their locations under the supervision of **KidsEat!** volunteers.

Lynda is grateful for the overwhelming support she has garnered and tells me that, "No one person can do it all and the **KidsEat!** program is a success because of all the people who have shared in our vision to help children. The thanks and praise go to our loyal volunteers and donors. We would not be where we are today without these amazing people. The **KidsEat!** program is a success because of the love, dedication and desire of the volunteers to help our valley's children. Their support in making this program a success is the backbone of **KidsEat!**"

For her continual contributions to the children, our future leaders, Lynda has just received the **Murray City Council Resident Service Award**. It was with deep appreciation and admiration that the Murray City Council honored Lynda Smart Brown on September 18, 2018 for her devoted service.

If you would like to make a difference contact **KidsEat!** at www.kidseatutah.org