

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 17, 2018



'Fill the Bus' campaign begins at Wegmans

Shoppers can donate to Foodlink's BackPack Program

ROCHESTER – For many students in our region, the school cafeteria is their most reliable source of food.

On weekends and during school breaks, however, healthy meals can be few and far between. As the school year approaches, Wegmans shoppers can play a vital role in ensuring thousands of students across the region are well fed, so they can be well read.

The annual Fill the Bus campaign, a food drive to benefit Foodlink's BackPack Program, officially begins Aug. 18 at all Rochester-area Wegmans. The BackPack Program provides bags of nutritious, kid-friendly foods every Friday to children who are at risk of food insecurity. Approximately 3,000 children at more than 80 schools benefit from this program in Foodlink's 10-county service area.

"Too many children in the Rochester region leave school on Friday afternoon without knowing when they'll eat their next meal," said Julia Tedesco, Foodlink's President & CEO. "Providing nourishment to kids when they no longer have access to school meals gives them a greater opportunity to succeed in the classroom and in our community."

Media sponsor 13WHAM ABC, FOX Rochester & CW Rochester joins Wegmans and new sponsor Fidelis Care in organizing this year's drive. Last year, the campaign collected 305,073 pounds of food, which helped fill more 60,000 bags. Wegmans hopes to exceed that 300,000-pound mark once again.

"Childhood hunger is a significant challenge for our community," said Pamela Hassen, Chief Member Engagement Officer for Fidelis Care. "We are grateful to be part of this important initiative and to help raise awareness in the fight against weekend hunger. We know how important it is for students to have proper nutrition for success in school and are confident that the Rochester Community will come together to help children in need."

Nearly 50,000 children in Foodlink's 10-county service area are considered food insecure, meaning they live in a household that lacks consistent access to enough healthy food. Wegmans shoppers will see

signs for the 2018 Fill the Bus campaign at local, participating stores, with suggested items to purchase and donate. Pre-packaged bags of food ranging from \$3 to \$10 are also available at checkout.

For more information about Fill the Bus and/or the Backpack Program, visit www.foodlinkny.org.

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Who: Foodlink, Wegmans Food Markets, Fidelis Care, 13WHAM ABC, FOX Rochester & CW Rochester

What: 2018 Fill the Bus campaign to benefit Foodlink's Backpack Program

Where: All Rochester-area Wegmans

When: Aug. 18 through Sept. 4



About Foodlink

Foodlink is a community food resource center and the Feeding America food bank serving Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties. We leverage the power of food to transform lives, end hunger and build healthier communities. Through

good stewardship, innovation and collaboration, Foodlink mobilizes a diverse network of partners and stakeholders to eradicate both the symptoms and root causes of hunger.

Our suite of food access programs provides new access points to nutritious and affordable food in underserved communities. Our team of nutrition educators empowers people at risk of diet-related illness with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. Our food banking operations distribute millions of pounds of food to a network of hundreds of human service agencies throughout our service area. The Foodlink Community Kitchen prepares and delivers thousands of meals daily for Rochester children, supports our regional agricultural economy by slicing locally grown apples, and hosts a one-of-a-kind career empowerment program to train individuals with barriers to employment for careers in the regional food industry. Learn more about how we are creating healthy futures for every community we serve at www.foodlinkny.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram at @foodlinkny.