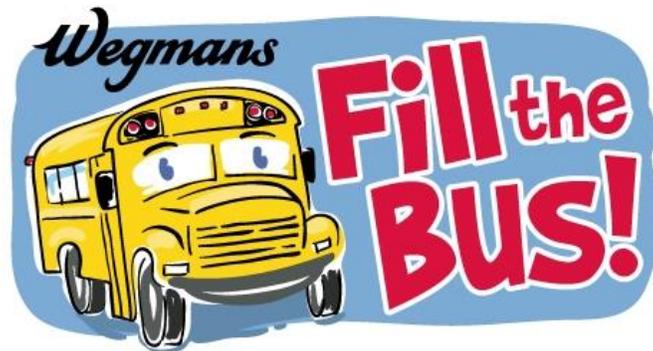


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 25, 2019



Annual 'Fill the Bus' campaign addresses childhood hunger

Shoppers can donate food to Foodlink's Backpack Program

ROCHESTER – On more than 73,000 occasions last year, a child at risk of hunger left school on Friday afternoon with a little something extra.

Foodlink's Backpack Program helps ensure children living in food-insecure households have enough food to eat when school meals are no longer available. Bags of kid-friendly, nutritious foods are packed and sent to schools around our region, and placed in the backpacks of more than 3,000 children every Friday. Between Aug. 25 and Sept. 7, Wegmans shoppers have the opportunity to support this program through the annual Fill the Bus campaign.

Now in its 7th year, Fill the Bus allows shoppers to purchase pre-packed bags of food that are sent to Foodlink this fall. Products such as soup, tuna, mac & cheese, and canned vegetables and fruit help give children a well-balanced assortment of meals and snacks when they are home from school. The campaign has collected nearly 1.3 million pounds of food for Foodlink since 2013.

"On weekends and during school holidays, food insecurity rises for low-income families in the Rochester area," said Julia Tedesco, Foodlink's President & CEO. "Often, these children are forced to skip meals, which hinders their physical, mental and social well-being. The Backpack Program and other child nutrition programs at Foodlink help ensure these kids have the nourishment they need to reach their true potential."

Media sponsor 13WHAM ABC, FOX Rochester & CW Rochester joins Wegmans Food Markets and Fidelis Care in supporting this year's food drive. Last year, the campaign collected more than 285,000 pounds of food.

"We can't thank our customers enough for their continued generosity during the Fill the Bus campaign each year," said Linda Lovejoy, Wegmans community relations manager. "The impact this campaign has

on the lives of thousands of children in our community is a great example of how communities thrive when we all work together.”

More than 45,000 children in Foodlink’s 10-county service area struggle with food insecurity, meaning they live in a household that lacks consistent access to enough healthy food and aren’t always sure when or from where they’ll get their next meal.

For more information about this year’s Fill the Bus campaign, visit www.FoodlinkNY.org.

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

What: 2019 Fill the Bus campaign

Where: All Rochester-area Wegmans

When: Aug. 25 through Sept. 7



About Foodlink

Foodlink is the Feeding America food bank serving Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties. For more than 40 years, we have leveraged the power of food to end hunger and build healthier communities. Through good stewardship, innovation and collaboration, Foodlink mobilizes a diverse network of community partners to eradicate both the symptoms and root causes of hunger.

Foodlink's community health programs provide new access points to nutritious and affordable food in underserved communities. We empower individuals and families to make healthy choices through nutrition education initiatives. Our food banking operations distribute millions of pounds of food to a network of nonprofit members. The Foodlink Community Kitchen nourishes thousands of children daily with healthy meals, slices locally grown apples, and prepares people for culinary careers through a one-of-a-kind career empowerment program. Learn more about how we are transforming lives and creating healthy futures for every community we serve at www.foodlinkny.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram at @foodlinkny.