



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Portage Health Foundation Contributes \$16,496.00 to 31 Back Packs.

[Hancock, MI] In a society where childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years and the percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18% in 2012, it is hard to imagine the other end of the spectrum – that nearly 20% of our children do not get enough, or in some cases anything -to eat. This is the mission of 31 Back Packs, Inc. to create a community where no child will go hungry.

Laurel Maki, co-founder of this local movement, said, “Just a few years ago, it was identified that some children were sneaking extra food from their school cafeterias on Friday in order to have something to eat on the weekend. When we heard about it, how could we ignore it? We had to do something!”

31 Back Packs, Inc. is a grass roots non-profit organization consisting of over 50 volunteers and countless contributors which has worked diligently to meet the ever present need of the community’s hungry children. They are now preparing food packs for over 180 children from throughout the surrounding community so those children have something to eat on the weekends.

An application to the Portage Health Foundation was met with equal concern and the Portage Health foundation has recently gifted \$16,496.00 to 31 Back Packs to support its efforts. “We applaud their efforts,” said Kevin Store, Executive Director of the Portage Health Foundation. “What they are doing is making a difference in the lives of those young people.” Store added, “When studies show that poor nutrition impairs cognitive functioning and the capacity to learn and develop, you have to recognize that the impact 31 Back Packs is making is far beyond just helping to put some food in those childrens’ bellies.”

Maki said that the goal of 31 Back Packs is to operate until the program is no longer needed, however; the program is seeing increases in numbers of children in need and they are working harder each week to meet that need.

The Portage Health Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that receives and contributes charitable donations which support the health needs of the community through enhanced philanthropy and community collaboration throughout Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon counties.