

# True Leaders in Service

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Every day, 4-H'ers across the nation pledge their hands to larger service. And every day, 4-H'ers are rolling up their sleeves and putting their pledge into action – leading positive change that empowers their peers and their communities.

This April, 4-H is launching an annual True Leaders in Service initiative in honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Month. True Leaders in Service, a month-long community service activation, will officially kick-off the first day of April, and culminate with the National 4-H Day of Service on Saturday, April 29. Thousands of 4-H'ers will venture out into their communities to do what 4-H'ers do best: they will lead in service to tackle community challenges and help meet the needs of others.

How can you join the movement?

Mahoning County 4-H is partnering with the South Side Academy in Youngstown to help fill their weekender bags.

What is a Weekender bag? It is a bag of food given to the students at South Side Academy on Fridays so that the students have access to food while they are not in the school's care.

Kristine Shaffer who is the Community Specialist at South Side Academy says; "I have noticed that a major obstacle in the lives of our children is access to food. We at South Side Academy do everything we can to eliminate as many obstacles as we can from their lives to ensure a successful learning opportunity. In order to do this, we have been seeking assistance to provide our students with access to food while they are not in our care, specifically on the weekends. 100% of the population of students at South Side Academy qualify for free lunch due to their poverty qualification."

What do those involved in the program have to say:

I think it's nice and helpful to other people and me because when my mom is sick I make a sandwich or mac and cheese with my sister. I think it's nice to give it out.

4<sup>th</sup> grade student

The bag helps me by saving my mom money so she doesn't have to go to the store all the time. Plus I get to spend more time with her. It's really fun to be able to work to give people food.

7<sup>th</sup> grade student

....These students are missing meals, and it is due to the poverty and deficiency of resources that they may not have available at home. I am so proud to take part in action to provide some form of nutrition for our children while they do not attend school. The students are generally grateful and appreciative of the smallest donations and the weekender bags are a perfect gift. There have been so many parents who have shown appreciation as well as the students looking forward to the bags at dismissal. I am greatly dedicated to these children at our academy and I too would like to say thank you for including me in something so phenomenal with this program.

School Nurse

....Every other Friday my kids take home bags of food to their families. They are excited to take on this responsibility and it makes them feel important. A number of students have told me that they have learned to make their own sandwiches and can "feed themselves" at home which provides them a sense of accomplishment and security. The significance of these weekender bags goes beyond an extra snack every other weekend. It provides our kids and parents an added helping hand and a few extra meals that could make a world of difference in a lot of homes.

Kindergarten Teacher  
South Side Academy

The weekender bags sent home with the students are a true blessing and my family really appreciates them. My son really enjoys and takes pride in being able to prepare small meals and lunches with the bread, peanut butter, and jelly. He is actually packing the family's lunches all week by making sandwiches. I take pride in taking my sandwiches to work knowing that my son made it special for me.

Parent

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**What:** Providing food for the Weekender Bags at South Side Academy

**When:** April 1<sup>st</sup> – April 29<sup>th</sup>

**How:** Ask club volunteers and members to donate items from the list and either bring to your club meeting or drop off at the Extension Office.

***All donations need to be delivered to the OSU Mahoning County Extension Office by Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>***

***What items are needed:***

- Peanut butter
- Grape jelly
- Pancake mix
- Syrup
- Ravioli (canned – such as Chef Boyardee)
- Cereal (Whole grain)
- Canned fruit in 100% juice
- Noodles
- Cans of tuna (packed in water)
- Cans of soup
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Cans of vegetables (low sodium)
- Boxes of Macaroni and Cheese
- Granola bars

Thank you for helping us provide for our community