



IMPACT REPORT

Academic Year
2024-2025

sterlinghelp.org



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A Message From The

HRTS CO-CHAIRPERSONS

As we look back on another year of service, we are filled with gratitude for you, our partners in this mission. Because of your generosity, HRTS has been able to meet hunger with heart, providing food, care, and hope to children and families across Sterling.

This year, your support fueled so much good:

- The Backpack Buddies program grew to serve even more students, ensuring that hundreds of children didn't face weekends without meals.
- Our first-ever Winter Coat Drive kept **over 400 students** warm and confident through the cold months.
- Two remarkable Sterling scouts led service projects with HRTS that put new shoes on students' feet and meals directly into families' homes.

These stories, and the many more reflected in this report, show the difference compassion makes when a community comes together.

We invite you to read, celebrate, and share this Impact Report as a reminder of the hope you help bring to our neighbors. Together, we will continue to grow our reach and deepen our impact in the Sterling community.

With heartfelt thanks,



Kate Luke & Nikki Smith Acierto
HRTS Co-Chairpersons



Kate Luke



Nikki Smith Acierto

HRTS would not be possible with the dedication of the following individuals:

- Sonia Ballinger
- Kathleen Bellamy
- Hilary Hultman-Lee*
- Rob Merola*
- Tom O'Neill
- Dan Robertson*
- Miriam Turner

*denotes Board members



MEALS

64K

~19% increase

+64,000 weekend meals provided to students in the Sterling community.



STUDENTS

300

~7% increase

Over 300 students received Backpack Buddies bags each weekend.



SCHOOLS*

14

HRTS supports **six** Sterling area schools through the **Backpack Buddies** program, and **nine** schools through the **winter coat drive**.

*HRTS supports the following schools through the Backpack Buddies program: Potowmack E.S., Lowes Island E.S., Horizon E.S., Algonkian E.S., River Bend M.S., and Potomac Falls H.S. and the following schools through the Winter Coat Drive: Forest Grove E.S., Guilford E.S., Potowmack E.S., Rolling Ridge E.S., Sterling E.S., Sully E.S., Sterling M.S., Robey H.S., and Park View H.S.



Impact Numbers

Behind every number is a child. A story. A need.

In Loudoun County—one of the wealthiest places in the nation—**one in four children lives in a food-insecure home**. That means right here in Sterling, more than **10,000 kids head into the weekend unsure if they'll have enough to eat**.

That's where HRTS steps in. Week after week, our 100% volunteer team packs Backpack Buddies bags filled with food so children don't spend Saturdays and Sundays hungry.

But these numbers aren't just about meals packed or bags delivered. They are about you—your generosity, your compassion, your belief that no child in our community should go without food.

Together, we are turning statistics into stories of hope. Together, we are meeting hunger with heart.

Financials

FISCAL YEAR 2024 (JAN 1, 2024-DEC 1, 2024)

GRANTS	\$5,150	FOOD/COAT EXPENSES	\$63,213
INDIVIDUALS	\$81,661	OTHER ITEMS	\$2,399
CORPORATIONS	\$500		
<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL INCOME	\$87,311	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$65,612

Stories of Impact

Meet the next generation of leaders bringing hope, dignity, and care to our community.



Stepping up for the community!

Christian, a dedicated Scout working toward his Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge with Scouting America, saw more than just a checklist—he saw an opportunity to make a difference. Moved by the growing need in his community, he launched a pilot shoe drive with an ambitious goal: raise \$1,000 to provide 20 pairs of new shoes and socks for local students.

Through determination, outreach, and heart, Christian raised an incredible \$700 and ensured that those first 20 pairs made it into the hands—and onto the feet—of students who needed them most. This past May, the first delivery was made to Potomac Falls High School, bringing not just shoes, but dignity and hope.

This is just the beginning. With Christian's leadership as our spark, we're excited to grow this initiative and expand its reach in the months ahead.

Delivering Hope, One Home at a Time

A heartfelt thank you to Tessa for her incredible leadership this summer as she earned her Girl Scout Silver Award through a project that truly made a difference.

Recognizing a gap in food accessibility, Tessa went beyond the traditional model of food distribution. While many food pantries rely on pickup at central locations, Tessa organized and led a home delivery service—ensuring that Sterling families without reliable transportation still received the support they needed. Her initiative brought not just food, but care, dignity, and peace of mind to neighbors who are often overlooked.



We're proud to support Scouts like Christian and Tessa who turn compassion into action. Service projects like theirs show the power of youth leadership—and we look forward to partnering with more Scouts on meaningful donation drives and community outreach.



*Student name has been changed for anonymity.

When Hunger Meets Heart

When Colby* was in third grade, his world changed—his dad lost his job, and things became tough at home. At first, the family managed, but over time they had to move to a smaller place, and family meals became less frequent.

Thankfully, Colby's teacher noticed something changed and stepped in to help. She connected Colby and his siblings with free school meals and Backpack Buddies, making sure they had nutritious food—especially on weekends.

HRTS is proud to have the resources to respond when children and families need extra support, even in the middle of the school year.

Because of generous supporters like you, kids like Colby can stay nourished, focused, and ready to learn. Thank you for making a real difference.

From One Story to Many



Our mission is simple: **make sure our neighbors aren't hungry**, and each year, that need in our community grows.



In AY25–26, we anticipate the number of students fed each week will rise from **300 to nearly 350**.



Every dollar raised brings us closer to saying **yes** when a school reaches out for help.

Corporate Partnerships

Our work to meet hunger with heart doesn't happen alone. Local businesses and professionals have stepped up to share their time, resources, and creativity, transforming the way we serve children and families in Sterling.

Team-Building Packs

Corporate groups joined us throughout the year for 1–2 hour Backpack Buddies packing events.

These packs not only provided hundreds of weekend meal bags for local students but also brought teams together in meaningful service.

HRTS SPOTLIGHT



Communications Intern

This summer, HRTS welcomed **Mary Ann Montgomery**, a rising senior at Oberlin College from Arlington.

Mary Ann supported our marketing and communications efforts by developing social media content and promotional outreach materials. She hopes to pursue a career in public relations after earning her degree.

Feature Partner:

Atiyeh Cosmetic & Family Dentistry

Dr. Atiyeh Emam, Cosmetic & Family Dentistry, donated toothbrushes and dental hygiene products for our Backpack Buddies program. Thanks to her generosity, students now receive quarterly hygiene packs alongside their food bags.



 **Atiyeh Emam DDS**
COSMETIC + FAMILY DENTISTRY
landsdownedental.com

Corporate & Volunteer Packing Events

These partnerships demonstrate the powerful role businesses can play in lifting up their community. Together, we're making sure children are cared for not just with food, but with dignity.



GAP Solutions Team Packing Event



Equinix Team Packing Event



Moms Demand Action Packing Event

We'd love to host your business or organization for a team-building packing event!

Contact us at:
info@hrtsterling.org

HRTS was proud to host the following organizations for packing events in 2024-2025:



Community Campaigns

Every season brings new opportunities to care for our neighbors.

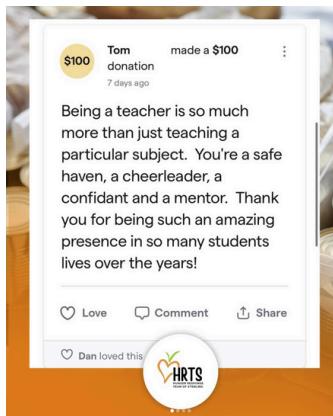
From keeping students warm through the winter to honoring the teachers who shape young lives, our community stepped up in extraordinary ways this year.

2024 Winter Coat Drive

Wrapped in Warmth!

Last winter, our community came together to ensure no child in Sterling faced the cold without a warm coat. Through generous donations of gently used coats and gifts that funded new purchases, we distributed **413 coats** across **9 local schools**.

That's 413 students who walked into the season with dignity, warmth, and the knowledge that their community cares for them. Thank you for making sure our kids could focus on learning and play, not the chill of winter.



2025 Teacher Appreciation Week

Honoring Teachers, Fueling Students

Every year during the first week of May, communities nationwide pause to celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week. Here in Sterling, we chose to say "thank you" in a way that reaches beyond the classroom.

Together, **you raised over \$4,000** to sponsor students in honor of the teachers who inspire them every day. Those gifts directly fueled our Backpack Buddies program, ensuring children head into the weekend with food in their bags and hope in their hearts.

And the gratitude didn't stop there. Teachers across Sterling received thank-you cards filled with heartfelt messages from students, families, and neighbors. While the official week may have ended, the impact continues—both for the children nourished by your gifts and the teachers who felt truly seen and appreciated.

Looking Ahead: 2025-2026 Goals

As we celebrate what we've accomplished together, we're also looking forward with hope and determination. In the year ahead, HRTS will continue walking alongside children and families in Sterling—meeting hunger with heart and growing our impact together.

Our priorities for 2025–2026 include:

- **Keeping 300+ students nourished** every weekend through Backpack Buddies, ensuring no child spends Saturday or Sunday wondering where their next meal will come from.
- **Bringing warmth through our annual Coat Drive**, so every student has what they need to face winter with comfort and dignity.
- **Expanding community and corporate packing events**, inviting more neighbors and businesses to join us in hands-on service.
- **Adding care beyond food** by providing hygiene kits and other essential items alongside our Backpack Buddies bags.
- **Investing in the future** by engaging youth leaders and interns whose fresh energy and ideas help shape tomorrow's Sterling.

Together, these goals are more than tasks, they are promises. Promises to the children who count on us, to the families who trust us, and to the community that continues to stand with us.



*Together, we can
do more than
feed, we can
care, clothe, and
lift up every
neighbor.*



Together, We Can Do More

How Can You Help This Year?

The need in Sterling is real, but so is the power of our community to respond. You've seen what happens when we come together. Now, here are some ways you can make a difference in the year ahead:

- **Host a drive or fundraiser** – Every dollar and item collected adds up to meals for students.
- **Organize a team event** – Gather coworkers, family, or friends for a group packing experience.
- **Share your skills** – Project management, grant writing, marketing, and communications expert.
- **Volunteer** – Pack food bags or deliver meals during the school year.

Every act of service strengthens our mission. Together, we are ensuring no child in Sterling goes hungry.

What's in a Backpack Buddies Bag?

Each Backpack Buddies bag holds at least six meals for a child to enjoy over the weekend. This past year, we added beans and rice to meet dietary needs and offer healthier, more filling options.

Want to help fill a bag? Check out our shopping list to see exactly what goes inside and how you can make a difference:

- 1 plain, shelf-stable milk
- 1 shelf-stable chocolate milk
- 1 pound bag of rice
- 1 canned beans (pinto or black)
- 2 proteins (canned tuna, canned chicken, Vienna sausages, Chef Boyardee with meat (excluding beef ravioli))
- 1 canned soup
- 1 ramen noodles or individual mac-n-cheese cups
- 2 fruits (applesauce, fruit cups)
- 1 granola bar
- 1 fruit snack
- 2 individual oatmeal packets





Thank You for Feeding Hope in Sterling

We're deeply grateful for the donors, volunteers, and partners who make this work possible.

Because of you, children in Sterling have full hearts, full bellies, and brighter days ahead.

Our work is 100% community-powered by people like you who care deeply about our Sterling neighbors.

Thank you to:

- Tuesday Packing Volunteers & Drivers
- Board & Advisory Committee
- Teachers at Partner Schools
- Parent Liaisons & PTAs
- Every Person Who Donates

98%

of all donations go directly to the food and clothing HRTS provides to students in Sterling.

HRTS| Hunger Response Team of Sterling
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