



EDUCATION



INCOME



HEALTH



COVID-19 pandemic represented an unprecedented challenge—for our community and for people everywhere—in ways that we are only now beginning to understand. During this pandemic United Way of Randolph has continued to support our 17 partner agencies who have continued offering services in many different ways as they meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and hope to continue doing so with your financial support. We will highlight a few of those agencies to give you the opportunity to reflect on how they provided services during this time.

Education

Backpack Pal Program: (BPP)



Helping children achieve their potential through education

- Improving access to quality, affordable **childcare** and early learning opportunities
- Providing after-school and mentoring programs for **at-risk youth**

CIS, BPP and COVID-19. . . what an “interesting” 4 months this has been! On March 14, 2020 the Governor of NC told us that schools would close effective March 16. Our last “typical” delivery of BPP had gone home on March 14. We scrambled to communicate with our local school systems as to how we could facilitate continued BPP delivery during the closures. For the first few weeks following the closures, we delivered bags, as did our partners, directly to the schools. Our student clients were notified by school staff that bags could be picked up when they came to pick up school lunches and other school-provided food. By the week of April 6, we were delivering double bags, bi-weekly and were serving 635 students. The number increased to 683 by May 1 and to 690 by June 1. These bags were taken to school sites and those not picked up were delivered to students’ homes by school staff.

Starting on June 17, we began our own delivery system for the summer months. Referrals were given to us by lead social workers in the local school systems and those are the students we served, adding a few more who called us requesting the service. Throughout the summer months and up until the week of Aug. 17, when school is scheduled to reopen, we have delivered double bags on a bi-weekly schedule and served 106 student clients.

The critical component of this continuing initiative was the funding. We were able, with the help of United Way of Randolph County, to receive EFSP (Federal Emergency Food and Shelter) funding to purchase the food for our summer program. Our local Rotary clubs and Kiwanis also contributed to the success of our BPP program during school closures due to COVID-19.

We are blessed to live in a community where United Way supports the community even during and especially during a pandemic. Our community has certainly stepped up to the plate to make this feeding program a success. Subsequently, we will now use the delivery model for summer supplemental feeding every summer moving forward.