

## **SCHOOL AND CHURCH FILL HUNGER GAP**

Putnam County kids in need of supplemental weekend food are benefitting from the efforts of a local church and their own classmates. On Friday, March 24, between 12:30-2:30 p.m., a two-week food drive at George Washington Elementary School will culminate with a food weigh-in to determine which classroom brought in the most food. Nutritionist Katherine Clark will oversee the weigh-in.

Back in 2011, Eleanor Presbyterian Church started a weekend “snak-pak” program, which now serves 40 children in need at GWE. Seeing the efforts of the church inspired the children, who came up with the idea to start a food drive to supplement the church’s program.

Debbie Yeager, the pastor’s wife, is grateful for the school’s desire to “pay it forward.” Yeager said, “It’s sad to think that hunger is still an issue in America. We use several methods to raise the \$3,000 needed for the school year. I have received grant funding from Walmart, donations from the GWE PTO and our own members, and even fresh apples from Gritt’s Greenhouse for the last two years, but the need continues to grow. This food drive will help us meet this need, and the wonderful part is that the kids are helping other kids.”

Melanie Rumer, the school’s counselor, keeps the church’s team informed as to how many food bags are needed per week. The typical snak-pak includes nutritional items to provide two breakfast, lunch and dinners, as well as snacks. Items can include cereal, fruit, cheese crackers, soup and spaghetti. Yeager said, “We try to provide a variety that kids will like and has nutritional value. We minimize sugary and salty items.”

The children’s interest in the church’s ministry has also generated another opportunity for service. The Student Lighthouse Team consists of 12 kids who would like to organize a project to improve the church’s property. School Principal Twyla Melton has offered to send the entire school for one day if necessary to do projects such as landscaping or clean-up. Yeager concluded, “This is a great demonstration of the words of St. Paul, who wrote, ‘Nothing counts except faith working through love.’”

For more information on the snak-pak program, contact Debbie Yeager at 304-360-5425.