

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 2026

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37th ANNUAL BROWN BAG CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan's Brown Bag Campaign is kicking off its 36th year this month. The campaign reminds the community of the needs of children in foster care, as well as the ongoing need for foster parents, volunteers, and donations to support this critical work. Each donation pays for things like a stuffed animal to hug, counseling, school supplies, winter boots, and opportunities such as music or dance lessons or summer camp. The Brown Bag Campaign has raised more than \$685,000 for children since it began 37 years ago.

Most children enter foster care with everything they own in a single bag. It's a moment no child should have to face—leaving behind everything familiar and stepping into the unknown with only a few belongings. Child and Family Services works hard to offer more than just safety. This nonprofit also provides comfort, dignity, and a sense of belonging. The Brown Bag Campaign is a symbol of that promise—and a call to action. The community is invited to help fill the gap for local children in foster care and youth in crisis by supporting this vital campaign.

"Every year, these little brown bags spark something powerful in our community," said Gina Aranki, Executive Director of Child & Family Services. "They're simple, but they represent hope—and the idea that we all have a part to play. Whether someone makes a donation, signs up to volunteer, or considers becoming a foster parent, the Brown Bag Campaign reminds us that even small actions can make a big difference in a child's life."

The hope that this little brown bag represents is the hope that a warm and loving foster or adoptive family will give each child the start in life that they deserve. Child & Family Services provided over 100 children with foster care services last year and has provided loving homes for more than 16,000 children since 1937! Child & Family Services also educates and strengthens hundreds of children and families yearly, providing trauma-informed counseling sessions by licensed therapists, community education on parenting and on suicide prevention, an independent living program for teens in foster care, case management, outreach, supervised visits and safe child exchanges. Olesons, Oryana, The Cadillac News, Traverse City Record-Eagle, and the Leelanau Enterprise proudly sponsor this year's campaign. Look for a little Brown Bag in your local paper or in Olesons and Oryana stores.

To donate online or to learn more about the Brown Bag Campaign go to cfsnwmi.org/brownbag. For more information on becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please call (231) 946-8975 or visit cfsnwmi.org/foster-care.