



**FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES**  
Fighting Hunger. Feeding Hope.

**FBR's  
NUTRITION NETWORK**

## PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

In Metro Denver, countless children worry about where they will find their next meal. They are the invisible and voiceless poor who stand in empty kitchens at dinnertime because their families are unable to provide the nutritious meals necessary for healthy development.

**Kids Cafe:** In January 1994, Food Bank of the Rockies responded to the need for a meal program designed specifically for children at risk of hunger. FBR launched the first Kids Cafe site at Rude Recreation Center with the support of the Denver Rustlers.

Thanks to the generosity of private contributors, the program has expanded to 14 locations in Metro Denver, Northern Colorado and the Western Slope. Food Bank of the Rockies has built alliances with recreation centers, schools, and organizations that provide facilities and sponsors who underwrite the costs of operating Kids Cafe. In Fiscal Year 2007, this community effort provided 187,000 meals in Metro Denver's poorest neighborhoods.

After school, free hot meals are served in conjunction with existing child development programs. The availability of food enhances these programs' effectiveness and decreases disciplinary issues. Numerous studies have shown a direct correlation between nutritious meals and increased academic performance in children. Because Kids Cafe assures them a meal in a safe environment, children are able to focus, retain information and enjoy learning.

Through these efforts, we know over 1,200 children are receiving at least one balanced meal per day in a nurturing environment. Food donations and bulk purchasing make it possible to provide balanced meals which meet the USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Service Program standards. These nutrition-specific meals cost approximately \$1.75 each. Program expansion is desperately needed, but subject to securing additional funding.

**After School Snacks for Tutoring Program:** The growing popularity of the Kids Cafe Meal Program brought with it many requests for additional sites in low income neighborhoods. Sadly, with limited resources, we're not yet able to grant those requests. As an alternative, the Snack Program was established, providing 100% fruit juice, milk, fruit, granola bars or whole grain snacks as mainstays. The free, healthy "treats" have attracted over 50 sites, distributing 1,500 snacks each weekday, during the school year. Because the vast majority of snacks are secured through FBR's warehouse, the cost can be held to approximately \$0.65 per serving. There is a tremendous need to expand this program, and meeting that need will require securing additional private funding.



photo by Chris Shinn



(over →)



**Totes of Hope™ - Children:** An unexpected result of both the meal and snack programs was an abundance of valuable feedback from the greater Denver metro area. While all complimentary in nature, the question was asked, "What about the poorest of these children on the weekends...., what do they eat then?" Food Bank of the Rockies responded with Totes of Hope™ - Children through which the most severely food insecure children receive a backpack each Friday filled with nine to ten pounds of healthy, nonperishable food. Children who otherwise might have to wait until Monday for a hearty meal, now have the security of knowing what's for dinner during the weekend. FBR now has several of these sites in some of the city's poorest areas with more than 400 child participants; many more are on the waiting list. It costs a mere \$2.65 to fill one of these backpacks - less than the average Cappuccino. This wonderful program alleviates hunger for several children, but for the many more who need our help, additional funding is desperately needed.



photo by Chris Shinn

Although there are several other aspects to FBR's Nutrition Network's programs for children, e.g. nutrition classes, community outreach support, holiday special events, etc., meals, snacks and weekend totes remain the very backbone of our being. Providing food for 400,000 children each year is our mission. We invite you to join us.

### **Kids Cafe currently serves over 1,200 children five nights each week at 14 locations:**

- ✎ Clare Gardens Housing
- ✎ Glenarm Recreation Center
- ✎ Denver Rustlers Kids Cafe at Rude Recreation Center
- ✎ Kids Cafe at Boettcher Boys and Girls Club
- ✎ Denver Broncos Boys and Girls Club
- ✎ Cope Boys and Girls Club
- ✎ Johnson Boys and Girls Club
- ✎ Kids Cafe at Owen Boys and Girls Club
- ✎ Wilfley Boys & Girls Club
- ✎ EOP Educational Outreach for Children of the Homeless at Gilpin Elementary
- ✎ Craig Boys and Girls Club, Craig CO
- ✎ Collbran CO's Assembly of God Kids Cafe
- ✎ Center of Hope
- ✎ Shopneck Boys and Girls Club



If you're interested in alleviating children's hunger  
or would simply like more information about Kids Cafe please call:

Jeanne Downes, Kids Cafe Director at 303.375.5831 or  
Lee Boteler, Kids Cafe Operations Manager at 303.375.5844

