

Nemours Children's Health and Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation Partner to Make this School Year Hunger-Free for Local Children

A joint donation to Blessings in a Backpack expands the program to 880 additional Northeast Florida children facing food insecurity

(JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Oct. 4, 2023) – Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville and the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation have partnered to make a donation that clears a years-long waiting list at existing Blessings in a Backpack schools with a critical need. The expanded support will provide healthy weekend food for 880 children in Northeast Florida during the 2023-2024 school year.

Millions of students nationwide get food during the school week through federal meal programs. However, many struggle with food insecurity on the weekends — or limited access to enough food to support a healthy life. Blessings bridges the gap in child nutrition over the weekend by providing ready-to-eat food for school-age children across America who might otherwise go hungry.

"We know that food insecurity has serious implications for childhood development including physical and mental health, cognitive and social development, and academic achievement," said Nemours Children's Health President and CEO R. Lawrence Moss, MD, FACS, FAAP. "We are so grateful for Jim and Tabitha and the work done by Blessings in a Backpack in helping our community's kids get the food they need to be healthy today and into adulthood."

Long-time Blessings partner, the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, has worked closely with the nonprofit for more than 10 years, supplying food each Friday for many students over the school year. Through the Blessings in a Backpack First Coast Chapter, they have provided millions of hunger-free weekends to Duval and St. Johns County school students.

"Blessings in a Backpack has always been near and dear to our hearts. Having the opportunity to partner with Nemours Children's Health to add these additional children so that hundreds of kids have hunger-free weekends has been so impactful," said Jim Furyk, PGA TOUR golfer.

With the expanded support of Nemours Children's and the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, Blessings in a Backpack First Coast Chapter will make hunger-free weekends a reality for 5,300 students in Northeast Florida this school year.

"Kids can't be kids when they're hungry. The consequences of childhood hunger are much more than a growling stomach... fatigue, the inability to concentrate, mood swings, and depression," said Erin Kerr, CEO of Blessings in a Backpack. "We're grateful to partner with Nemours Children's Health through the 'Well Beyond Medicine' initiative to prevent weekend hunger and create a healthier future for Jacksonville kids."

The children added to the Blessings program encompass two counties and seven schools: Andrew Robinson Elementary School, Annie R. Morgan Elementary School, Hyde Grove Elementary School, Mayport Middle School, and San Jose Elementary School in Duval County; and James E. Webster Elementary School and John A. Crookshank Elementary School in St. Johns County.

About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two freestanding children's hospitals and a network of more than 70 primary and specialty care practices. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most visited website for information on the health of children and teens, Nemours KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy and prevention programs to the children, families and communities it serves. For more information, please visit [Nemours.org](https://nemours.org)

About the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation

The Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation was created in 2010 to help children and families in need. This Jacksonville based non-

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profit partners with charities across North Florida to provide project specific funding and essential programming. The annual Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS presented by Circle K, created to raise charity dollars to support these partnerships, brings the community together to increase awareness and funding for programs that support education, healthcare, nutrition and safety for at risk children and families. Programs created from the support of the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation in the Jacksonville Community include: Hope for the Holidays, which packs over 6,000 bags filled with a holiday meal for at risk families, Operation Shower which provides car seats, strollers and baby essentials to active military families, Blessings in a Backpack, which feeds thousands of food insecure children each week of the school year, and Childcare specialists and services to provide medically complex children care through Wolfson's and Community PedsCare. The Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation is dedicated to bringing our community together to improve the lives of the children and families who live on the First Coast through each of these programs and many more.

About Blessings in a Backpack First Coast Chapter

Hunger has both short- and long-term adverse effects on children's health and ability to succeed in school. Blessings in a Backpack mobilizes communities, individuals, and resources to provide weekend food for school-aged children across America who might otherwise go hungry. Blessings in a Backpack First Coast Chapter provided 175,700 hunger-free weekends for 4,500 kids in Clay, Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns Counties during the 2022–2023 school year. Visit firstcoast.blessingsinabackpack.org to learn how you can feed the kids in our community this weekend.

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