

January 2023



**Dear Kids Aid Family,**

We write you this letter with **grateful** hearts, overflowing with gratitude for this year of opportunity and growth at Kids Aid. Last year during our school and summer programming, we served over 55,000 bags of weekend food to children. At this moment, only half way through the school year, we have already provided just shy of 35,000 bags. The need in our community is huge and continues to grow. Each week, we are providing a steady number of nearly 2,000 bags.

Kids Aid has been able to provide weekend food bags to the children in our community for 15 years. We are abundantly **grateful** for each and every one of our donors who help make this program possible. **We simply could not do all the things we do without the support from donors like you.** We are incredibly **grateful** for the 175+ community volunteers who faithfully serve the community through Kids Aid.

We are **grateful** that we have been able to procure food, though costs continue to increase. We are **grateful** for creativity with our menus and recipes so that when faced with supply shortages, we have been able to pivot and select different products. We are **grateful** for classrooms full of students, eager to see what we are sending home each week. We are **grateful** for the many staff members at each location we serve, distributing the bags and providing feedback.

Our mission is **to alleviate childhood hunger so kids can be kids.** We are doing our best to provide children with healthy, easy to prepare foods and snacks for the weekend so they can return to school **only hungry to learn!**

Over 10,500 students in Public School District 51 are considered food insecure. 52% of those children qualify for free or reduced lunches. Breakfast after the bell, healthy snack programs, and the mobile Lunch Lizard program in the summer have helped children immensely, however, there is still a weekend gap where children can be left without food. **That's why Kids Aid exists!** By filling tummies over the weekend, we are also able to provide more stability, better focus in the classroom, and an advantage for children to be more prepared to learn on Monday mornings. An additional goal at Kids Aid is to provide children with the tools and resources they need that will help them develop a lifetime of healthy eating habits. Our new recipes and Kid-Chef videos are designed to help children do just that.

**Our program remains strong and grateful!** We are currently providing weekend bags to 76 sites that serve children 18 and under. Our reach is far beyond Public School District 51. We serve preschools, daycares, home school programs, private schools, charter schools, Colorado Mesa University students, Plateau Valley Schools, Debeque Schools, and even a few private home school deliveries. We also have three "Pop Up Stops" which are community locations

committed to having their doors open after school hours, in the event someone didn't get a bag at their school location. We have also made long school breaks easier to endure by allowing participants to double their order. Without access to school provided food, children needed something to bridge that gap. We are **grateful** to be able to support those needs.

### **Our job is not done...**

We continue to seek feedback from participants, site coordinators, drivers, bag packers, and anyone involved in our program. We value those thoughts and take them to heart. We are focused on the quality of our program and the products we source. We challenge ourselves daily to make this program the best it can be. Thank you for choosing us, for investing in our mission to alleviate childhood hunger. Thankfully, we are not alone in our work. We are members of the Mesa County Hunger Alliance, a group of over 20 local agencies, all working together to end hunger in our community. It certainly takes a village! We are **grateful** for our community partners and are proud to serve alongside them.

**On behalf of the Kids Aid Board of Directors**, I want to express our gratitude for your generosity, tremendous support, encouraging words, and especially your hearts to feed the children in our community. As the new Executive Director, I am constantly impressed by the stories I hear about your connection to children, students, teachers, and the “why” behind choosing to support Kids Aid. I am **grateful for you**. I welcome and encourage warehouse tours. It is a joy and honor to meet those who support our mission. Whenever you are able, please consider making a donation to our organization this coming year so that we can continue our mission of feeding the kids in our community. Every dollar makes it possible for a child to be nourished with healthy food.

We are proud to be a community funded organization. It is our hope that the children we serve now in our community will one day be where you are, helping change lives where they live.

***Thank you.***

From the bottom of our hearts,

*Tessa Kaiser*

Tessa Kaiser  
Executive Director  
[tessa@kidsaidcolorado.org](mailto:tessa@kidsaidcolorado.org)  
970-712-2847



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2978 Gunnison Ave, Grand Junction, CO 81504 [www.kidsaidcolorado.org](http://www.kidsaidcolorado.org) 970-210-8754 EIN#26-1673162