

the Ripple Effect of Hunger

Points Residents Step Up Through Bellevue LifeSpring

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It's hard to focus in school on an empty stomach. Food insecurity – defined as not having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food – can have severe and long-lasting consequences for students. Students who experience hunger often get lower grades than their peers and are at higher risk of not making it to high school graduation.

Every school in the Bellevue School District has students at risk of experiencing hunger. Over 3,545 Bellevue students are currently on the federal free and reduced lunch program. Many of these students rely on the food they receive at school as their primary source of nutrition.

A Story of Your Support

Sarah is a single mother living here in Bellevue with her two children. Her daughter is four, and her son is a freshman at Sammamish High School, where over 400 students, including her son, are on the free and reduced lunch program. Her son is in his first year of high school, and Sarah knows the importance of him getting good grades so that he graduates and has the opportunity to go on to college and find success as an adult.



Sarah's story is similar to many local families who are currently experiencing food insecurity.

Prior to the pandemic, Sarah had a job working at a large local company. Sarah had been doing her best to provide for her kids. There was never enough for saving for special vacations, but she was able to provide for her daughter and son's basic needs — keeping a roof over their heads, food on the table, and their transportation needs met — quite an accomplishment for a single mother with two kids.

Like many others, when the pandemic hit, Sarah was laid off. After losing her job, it took Sarah a couple of months to find a new one. This gap in employment set her finances back considerably. Sarah began paying bills late or putting payments on her credit card — ultimately accruing late fees and more debt. She enters a cycle with little to no choice when more money is going out than coming in.

Sarah is now working for a temp agency. However, the hours are inconsistent, and her income continues to fluctuate. Recently, she lost several workdays after a Covid-19 outbreak at her daughter's daycare, requiring her family to quarantine. The missed hours caused an unexpectedly large gap in her paycheck. Without consistent income to rely on, Sarah is often left with the devastating choice between paying bills, like rent on time, or buying groceries.

When every dollar is accounted for, one unexpected setback, like quarantining, can be a devastating loss of income. They began running out of

food mid-month and having to cut the size of their meals or skip meals altogether. When she reached out to Bellevue LifeSpring, her son had been arriving at school hungry several days a week, and his grades showed it. His grades were dropping, and Sarah was short on next month's rent.

Thanks to the support of Points community members like you, Bellevue LifeSpring was able to provide immediate support for Sarah and her children. They received grocery store food vouchers and two months of upcoming rent. This emergency support will provide Sarah and her kids with the stability they need while Sarah searches for a new job.

Since the pandemic began, your generosity has helped provide over 940,000 meals for students in need. With the support of our Points neighbors, we aim to end hunger and homelessness for children in Bellevue and keep families like Sarah's on track to stay stable and self-sufficient. When we give where we live, we all benefit.

To learn more about how you can support pathways towards brighter futures for all Bellevue students, please visit www.BellevueLifeSpring.org.