



Wild Bird Charity was incorporated as a nonprofit in March 2016. The founding board members were a group of friends who made a decision to finish their lives by giving back to their community, Whatcom County. The primary purpose of the charity is to address poverty issues in Whatcom County and to do it in a manner that addresses gaps in services in the county. This is how the Wild Bird Weekend Food Bag Program began - making sure that children who received free or subsidized school breakfast and lunch at school Monday through Friday, did not go hungry on the weekends or come to school hungry on Monday mornings.

Our Weekend Food Bag Program was created to meet the needs of Whatcom County school children who were receiving free or reduced lunches during the week but were still experiencing food insecurity on the weekends. We provide 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners and snacks for kids each weekend during the school year. Each bag of food costs around \$3.50 per child, and is comprised of healthy, shelf-stable food, as much as is possible. In the past 2 years our program has grown exponentially, serving 350 children each week 2 years ago, to 450 last year, to over 950 kids weekly today. The increase is mostly due to two key factors. First, we are simply serving more schools. Two years ago, we were serving 11 schools, today it is 27. Secondly, inflation. The increase in food prices over the past year or so has hit families hard and they are looking for more resources.

Our program budget is \$132,933 for the 2023-24 school year, with \$117,500 going to food alone. Our board remains fiercely committed to the belief that kids shouldn't go hungry and personally donated almost 30% of our budget last year. We continue to partner with the Blaine School District, Mt. Baker School District, Bellingham School District, and Ferndale School District. In addition, this year we added Lummi Elementary and also began an ongoing partnership with "Backpack Buddies" to provide bags for some schools in Lynden. We also partner with the Blaine Food Bank who provide us with 100% of the food for the students we serve in the 4 schools in Blaine. Saint Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church and the Blaine School District each provide us with free space for storage and for assembly. Our operation is lean, with no office space, no vehicles, and only one part-time employee. We depend heavily on volunteers from the community, and 20-25 people volunteer 2 hours each week to assemble and deliver the food bags, for a total of 1,500 volunteer hours each year.

Wild Bird is filling a significant gap in services in Whatcom County and will continue to do so as long as there is a need. In regards to metrics and outcomes, we know from several studies that children who eat well perform much better in school than children who are hungry, but we also believe that no child should experience food insecurity, simply for moral and ethical reasons.

Thank you for your support of this work. We are thrilled to be associated with Barron!

~Mark Moder

Executive Director
Wild Bird Charity