

CATHOLIC CHARITIES JACKSONVILLE CHRONICLES

FALL 2025



Filling Backpacks with Food and Students with Hope



The Weekend Hunger Backpack Program fills backpacks with nutritious meals for local food-insecure students. We helped nourish 2,765 students last year.

Catholic Charities is focused on finding and filling gaps for people during times of crisis. That's why we not only help food-insecure individuals at our pantry but also support students through our Weekend Hunger Backpack Program.

Free or reduced-cost school lunches ensure at-risk students eat during the day, yet hunger doesn't take weekends off. Thanks to our donors, we were able to provide 100 bags of nutritious, shelf-stable food to S.P. Livingston Elementary as students returned to school.

Faculty like Dr. Jasmine Bolling, a counselor at S.P. Livingston, says this added support ensures students have the nourishment they need to succeed.

"Your generosity has done more than fill empty stomachs. It has filled our students with hope, dignity, and the reassurance that they are cared for," said Bolling. "Providing these food bags on a weekly basis eases the burden for families and allows students to arrive ready to learn. Because of you, these children have one less barrier standing in the way of their potential."

Catholic Charities Regional Director Eileen Seuter says financial donations go a long way in sustaining at-risk students and the food pantry.

Consider these statistics:

- \$32 provides one student with a weekend hunger-relief backpack for the school year
- \$50 feeds one senior citizen for two weeks
- \$134 feeds one family of four for two weeks

"From our backpack program to the food pantry to distributions that assist seniors, homeless teens, and local churches, we're helping people make ends meet in times of struggle," said Seuter. "These efforts stabilize thousands of people in Northeast Florida each month."

If you would like to help our hunger-relief efforts, donate today at [CCBJax.org](https://www.ccbjax.org).

New ESOL Program Helps Dreams Take Shape



Sweeta, Cassandra, Bernadette, Yrese

Sweeta dreams of opening her own catering business. Bernadette is actively preparing to become a citizen. Cassandra, an accomplished teacher and accountant in her home country, hopes to reenter the workforce. And Yrese is learning the language to better connect with her nephew who only speaks English at home.

These four women – Sweeta from Afghanistan, Bernadette from Congo, and Cassandra and Yrese from Haiti – are just a few of the many ESOL students using our new Conversations and Computers class to expand their opportunities.

Catholic Charities launched the program in August for any ESOL students who wanted to learn beyond formal language classes. Already, more than 20 students gather weekly to improve employment skills and manage everyday tasks like grocery shopping and medical appointments with greater confidence.

Last year, we taught English to 2,593 students at various academic levels, removing language barriers and opening doors with the help of our experienced ESL instructors. This new course is yet another way we help hard-working people become more self-sufficient.

Please consider strengthening local families and opening more doors through ESOL by giving today at CCBJax.org.

Other Ways We Help



Our Food Assistance program provides essential nourishment through our community food pantry. **Last year, we fed 28,952 food-insecure people.**



Our Emergency Financial Assistance program prevents homelessness by covering the cost of rent, mortgage, utilities, and food. **Last year, we supplied \$3,125,628 in emergency aid to those in crisis.**

Letter from the Regional Director

Dear Friends,

Each new season brings opportunities to meet community needs with compassion and creativity. This fall, two programs are helping us make a lasting impact.

With the return of the school year, our Weekend Hunger Backpack Program is once again providing healthy groceries for children who face food insecurity. Each Friday, students take home backpacks filled with nutritious items to sustain them through the weekend. By easing the burden of hunger, the program ensures children return to school on Monday nourished and focused. This effort is possible thanks to strong partnerships with schools, volunteers, and supporters who believe every child deserves to thrive.

Our Conversations and Computers initiative, part of the ESOL program, gives immigrant neighbors the chance to build both English fluency and digital skills. Through conversational practice and hands-on computer training, participants gain the confidence to navigate daily life, succeed in the workplace, and connect more fully in the community.

Together, these programs embody our mission: meeting immediate needs while fostering hope and dignity. You can be part of this important work. Whether you choose to volunteer your time or make a donation, your partnership helps transform lives and strengthen our community.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Eileen Seuter
Regional Director
Catholic Charities Jacksonville

