



# Bremerton Backpack Brigade

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"Ladies and Gentlemen, children of all ages" Let the fun begin!!!! School starts September 1<sup>st</sup>, and the Brigade plans to be packing and delivering food backpack by mid to late September. The beginning of any school year is an exciting time and usually filled with lots of changes and even some challenges (especially as COVID got a grip on our nation and world). Fall of 2021 is no exception.

As we send out this newsletter, we are in the midst of moving our pantry to a fantastic, spacious, new location. Once again, the Bremerton School District has provided rent free space for the Brigades' center of operation. We'll be in a large portable behind Naval Ave Early Learning Center. We are thrilled both by the support of the district and this beautiful new space. *Thank you, Bremerton School District! Superintendent Aaron Leavell and Patty Glaser, Community Relations Coordinator!*

Actually, this move represents a homecoming of sorts. The Brigade was "born" at Naval Ave school. Teachers there a decade ago, led by Rhiannon Larson, and using primarily their own funds, began sending backpacks of food home to their students in need. Our "infant" board of directors was interested in creating a district wide program to feed hungry children, so we worked with Rhiannon learning the ropes, for about a year. Then with her patient instruction and wonderful example (and unfailing, generous community support) we began reaching out to other elementary schools in our district adding a new school, or two, each year, until eventually we were able to serve seven elementary schools, including a new charter school, and three alternative schools in Bremerton.

We don't have a schedule created yet this year for beginning to pack and deliver the backpacks (most likely there will be panic driven emails coming your way soon with all those details), but here's what we do know at this point:

*Because of the COVID variant and for the safety of our volunteers, their families and loved ones, and the children we serve (who cannot yet get vaccinations);*

- All volunteers working in our pantry must be fully vaccinated!
- We will wear masks while working together inside.
- Social distancing, by keeping our volunteer numbers low each week will be our goal.
- Hand sanitizer and disposable gloves will also be available.
- We will be packing and delivering on Friday mornings (or the last day of the school week).
- We will be starting a bit later (9:30am) to accommodate the bus and parent student drop offs.

Hold on to your hats, take a deep breath, Here we go.....



**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED!**



As the new school year starts, the Brigade will need volunteers to help pack and deliver backpacks each week. If you are fully vaccinated and interested in helping this year, please let us know. You may want to join us every week, once or twice a month, every now and then, or for special tasks. We are excited to see you again or meet new friends. Come help feed hungry kids, and make a difference in those young lives!

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Amazon donates.



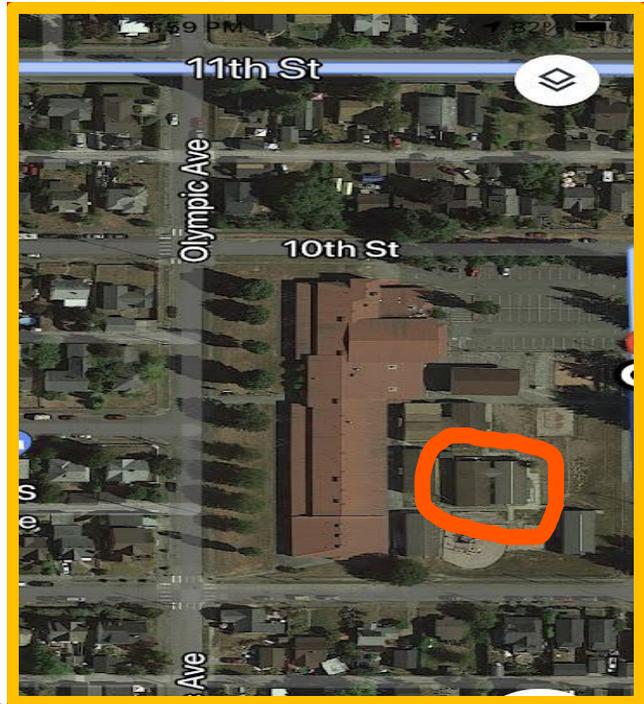
As much as we might hate the reality that with the start of a new school year, the holiday season is always close on it's heels! If you do any of your holiday shopping on line, and haven't already done this, please sign up with AmazonSmiles, naming the Bremerton Backpack Brigade as the non-profit you'd like to support, and PRESTO! a small percentage of the total of your purchases will be donated to the Brigade, at NO cost to you! When a whole lot of people donate, even a little, those donations make a big difference.

*PS Birthday gifts, anniversary gifts,  
"just because" gifts or even necessities, all count  
so you don't have to wait for Christmas!*

"We are all broken...  
that's how the light gets in."

-Hemingway

Don't know if this helps you find our new pantry or not, but this is a Google Earth satelight view of Naval Avenue Early Learning Center. The school is the long red roof in the center of the picture - 900 Olympic Ave, it faces Olympic Ave. If you turn on Olympic, from 11<sup>th</sup> and then left on 10<sup>th</sup>, the school will be on your right. There's a big parking lot just behind the school, but it will likely be filled up with teachers vehicles. Keep going on 10<sup>th</sup> until you can turn right into the Bus Lane. Volunteers will be able to park in that lane from 9:30 til about 11:30. Our new space is circled in the picture and we'll have signage out to help everyone find us.



**Food  
Drive**

August 26th  
4pm-7pm  
Evergreen  
Park

Help us provide a  
supplemental food  
source on weekends  
for children in need  
throughout  
Bremerton by  
bringing  
non-perishable food  
items for the  
Backpack Brigade

REMERTON  
COMMUNITY  
FARMERS MARKET

[www.bremertonbackpackbrigade.org](http://www.bremertonbackpackbrigade.org)

Bremerton Community Farmers Market

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