



MainPower Pantry

Introduction

As the cost of living continues to rise, it's evident that many individuals in our district are facing challenges in affording food, fuel, and rent. Together Hurunui is committed to alleviating this burden through a targeted approach, offering a variety of initiatives and projects. Our ambitious vision for food security in Hurunui is simple: 'no one should go hungry.'

Background

The MainPower Pantry has emerged from the 2023 Snack Food in Schools Programme, which is led by Together Hurunui.

The initiative began at Hurunui College following a pilot program that distributed 'breakfast packs.' This effort stemmed from discussions with teachers who observed that some students were arriving with incomplete lunch boxes or very little food. This concern aligned with the school's awareness that 20% of its student body lives in poverty. The breakfast packs provided valuable data, as each pack contained a muesli bar, fruit, and an Up and Go, distributed by a teacher as students arrived at school. This was in partnership Hurunui Youth and Satisfy Food Rescue.

Building on this trial, the Snack Food in Schools programme continued throughout 2023, expanding to include our three area schools. Toward the end of the year, discussions with MainPower led to the acquisition of freezers, aimed at providing students with more sustainable and less processed food options.



Challenges

Staff observed an increasing number of students arriving at school without any food.

In 2024, four primary schools joined the initiative at various times, thanks to community discussions and partnerships with Together Hurunui.

These schools expressed a strong interest in the Snack Food in Schools project and have been open with Together Hurunui regarding the extent of food poverty in their communities.

Solutions

- 1 The snack foods are available in a handy access area for teachers and school staff. They can select something easily without it being a fuss and drawing attention to the student.
- 2 While the snacks 'filled a gap' it was noted that some foods are highly processed because it was not suitable to have perishable items.
- 3 Two of the area schools now have a freezer. This allows Together Hurunui to include a range of family sized meals, alongside nutritious lunch options.

Outcomes

- ✓ 2024 was a growth year for the Snack Food in Schools programme, it increased from our three area schools to include four primary schools across the Hurunui district.
- ✓ The Together Hurunui Facilitator worked with Satisfy Food Rescue who rescue food from supermarkets, growers and cafes. Because of the freezers items like bread can be included as a staple item.
- ✓ The Waikari Op Shop supported their local schools with financial support, which assisted with building a stronger community connection.
- ✓ The Snack Foods in Schools Programme has taken pressure off schools. Teachers were feeding students out of their own pocket or with school funds. Teachers have noticed improved attention during class. The freezers have allowed students to have a more nutritious lunch.
- ✓ Together Hurunui received initial funding funding from the Ministry of Education to start Snack Food in Schools to assist with combating trancy. If students have access to food at school they would be more inclined to attend classes. There has been improved outcomes in this area.
- ✓ Having access to a freezer has allowed the Together Hurunui Facilitator to include family sized meals. Schools have mentioned that its been great to be able to support families by sending home a meal when dealing with complex education issues.

The Future...

- Together Hurunui would like to expand with more freezers into some of our primary schools, where the snack food isn't quite enough.
- Continue to have conversations with our 13 schools to see how they can be supported.
- Continue to have an impact on food insecurity in our communities and see our tamariki and rangatahi thrive at school.



'Its so great when we hear the stress stories from parents and being able to respond in a really practical way by offering the family in need of a lasagne. Thank you!'

Cheviot School Teacher

'A Grandad (70) is raising his 3 grandchildren and was fairly emotional talking about their needs and wanting to do the best for his mokopuna. We made a plan but it was great to send him home with a smile and some soup from the MainPower freezer. Thank you MainPower!'

Cheviot School Teacher

Thank
you

