



# Changing the World One Backpack at a Time: The Story of Micah's Backpack and Community Engagement

*Jennie Hodge, Nancy Franz*

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It started with one backpack, or rather, one backpack program. Micah's Backpack was an initiative launched in Blacksburg, Virginia. The group, organized by members of St. Michael Lutheran Church, initially started by distributing backpacks full of food to five children from low-resource families. Now, the outreach has grown to feed nearly three hundred children. In addition to Micah's Backpack, new programs have flourished under the Micah's Caring Initiative: Micah's Mobile Backpack, Micah's Garden, Micah's Soup for Seniors, and Micah's Closet. All provide vital services to the community.

Authors Jennie Hodge and Nancy Franz detail the beginnings of the Micah's Caring Initiative to inspire readers and to provide a case study in how to create a community-outreach program that serves the needs of low-resource families. They focus on building bonds between dedicated community organizations and passionate individuals. Many people in a community care deeply for their neighbors and town and may not know the outlets or initiatives they can use to give back. Hodge and Franz provide step-by-step instructions for identifying vulnerable areas in a community and building an action plan and organization to address them. Anyone who dreams of productive community engagement will find their advice invaluable.

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