



www.foodbankst.org

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**TO:** News Editors  
**DATE:** February 5, 2009  
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Food Bank of the Southern Tier  
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**RE:** *The Owego Rotary Club Provides Grant to Assist with Funding for the Food Bank of the Southern Tier's Backpack Program™*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Elmira, NY** – The Food Bank of the Southern Tier announces that a grant was received in the amount of \$600 from the Owego Rotary Club. The grant funds will be used to help fund the Food Bank's Backpack Program™ in Tioga County.

"The Owego Rotary Club is one of forty-four service clubs in Rotary District 7170, which covers seven counties in New York State, reaching from Waverly on the west to Hancock on the east and farther north than Cooperstown. Rotary goals include improving one's community and being of service worldwide. A primary goal of Rotary International, with its 1.2 million members, is to reduce childhood mortality through cleaner water, alleviation of poverty and supplying food," said Carolyn Wright of the Owego Rotary Club.

Wright added, "In the United States, one of every eight children under the age of twelve goes to bed hungry every night. By supporting the Southern Tier Food Bank's Backpack Program, in operation in Tioga County, Owego Rotary's sixty-two members are providing support for youth right in their own community, helping to reduce the number of children who go to bed hungry."

The Food Bank's Backpack Program™ was started in 2005. This program provides healthy, kid-friendly, and easy to prepare foods to children at risk of hunger over weekends and holiday breaks when children don't have access to free or reduced price school meal programs. During the 2007/ 2008 school year, the Food Bank's Backpack Program™ served 16 school districts across the Southern Tier, reaching over 830 children per week. So far for the in the 2008/ 2009 school year, the Backpack Program™ is serving 18 sites and an estimated 1,100 children per week.

Natasha Thompson, President and CEO of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier said, "The Food Bank is thrilled to have the Owego Rotary Club partnering with us to help alleviate child hunger in Tioga County schools. While our organization is committed to expanding the Backpack Program to every school district in the Southern Tier, we simply could not do it without the support of engaged community members and groups such as the Owego Rotary Club. I am confident this partnership will have a tremendous impact on the lives of the neediest children in Tioga County and I thank the members of the Rotary Club for their leadership and generosity."

To learn more about the Food Bank of the Southern Tier and how you can support local hunger-relief efforts, visit the Food Bank's website at [www.foodbankst.org](http://www.foodbankst.org) or call 607-796-6061.

About the Food Bank

In operation since 1981, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier distributes food and food-related products to people in need through a network of more than 180 hunger-relief agencies including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other non-profit organizations. The Food Bank also has a number of programs that fight hunger including the Backpack Program™ and Mobile Food Pantry. Located in Elmira, NY it is a regional agency of Catholic Charities and one of eight Feeding America affiliate Food Banks in New York State serving the six counties of Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Tompkins, Tioga and Steuben.

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