

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**SUE SERINO**  
Senator, 41<sup>st</sup> District

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**SERINO THANKS COMMUNITY FOR DONATIONS TO THE RALPH R. SMITH  
SCHOOL BACKPACK PROGRAM**



**Serino pictured above with (L-R) Melissa Lawson, Ralph R. Smith Elementary School Principal and Debra Tamulonis, School Speech-Language Pathologist, while dropping off the many donations provided by the community.**

HYDE PARK, NY – Recently, Senator Sue Serino held a food drive to help replenish the school pantry at Ralph R. Smith Elementary School to assist in ensuring that no student goes home hungry by bolstering the school’s Backpack Program. Senator Serino today thanked the community for their incredible generosity in supporting the food drive and providing carloads of nonperishable food items to be donated to the school.

*“The Backpack Program that was created by the faculty and staff of the Ralph R. Smith School serves as an essential program for many children and families throughout our community,” said*

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*Senator Sue Serino, “Without the help of our neighbors, this program would not be able to continue, and the school would not be able to provide this critically important service to local students in need. We were blown away by community’s response to this food drive, and we cannot thank residents enough for coming together to support this effort.”*

Two years ago, faculty and staff at the Ralph R. Smith Elementary School came together to create the ‘Nourish Your Neighbor Backpack Program’ to ensure that no student goes home for the weekend without substantial meals. Each week, members of the school community fill backpacks with nonperishable food items that are sent home with children who might otherwise not have a guaranteed meal. Through the program, each Friday, students are given a backpack stocked with single-serve, nonperishable foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

While the food drive was originally slated to run from March 18, 2019 until March 29, 2019, it proved so successful, that the drive was extended for an additional week. While Senator Serino’s office is no longer serving as a collection location, backpacks are given out to students every Friday throughout the entirety of the school year and the program is always welcoming donations. To make a donation, please reach out to Melissa Lawson, Ralph R. Smith Elementary School principal, at 845-229-4060.