# Hunger Summit- Breakout Session 2A

## Jon Barnacastle and Tracey Alderdice

**School Pantry Programs: An Overview**

*Jon*

* Works at the central Food Bank in Birmingham, which serves 12 counties.
* Geographic gaps in service areas require local organizations to implement pantries and other programs.
* Demographic Gap:
  + Children are a large majority of the food-insecure population (1 in 3 individuals in Alabama). This need can be met by Backpack programs, Weekenders programs, etc.
* Challenges in Backpack programs:
  + Kids are sharing the food with other members of the households, which leaves the kids hungry.
  + Some kids still don’t have enough food.
  + The backpacks are heavier and harder to carry.
* Solutions to these issues:
  + School pantries allow families access to food.
  + Preassemble boxes.
  + Monthly distributions
  + “Just in Time” deliveries: produce delivery and distribution occurs the same day (eliminates storage)
  + Client Choice: families can “shop” for their needs.
* Grocery boxes are based on MyPlate to ensure nutrient variety.
* Have student service groups volunteer with the program.
* School pantries are successful because they engage the parents.

*Tracy*

* Nashville food bank covering 46 counties with 470 partner agencies.
* Utilizes backpack programs and 30 food pantries. There are only 2 rural pantries.
  + Rural pantries operate differently than urban ones: PUSH method means schools have the responsibility of finding the families in need. PULL method means schools ask the food bank when they are in need. PUSH is used in rural areas.
* Receiving food from second harvest: 70-80 families served monthly
* They do not pre-box, but they do have items preplanned. Everything is based on MyPlate recommendations. They do not provide produce.
* Lessons learned:
  + separate backpack and pantry programs
  + make sure schools have programs in place so they can effectively distribute (family resource centers, etc.)
  + Try to involve the parents as much as possible.
  + Use cloth, reusable bags (no logo) to distribute foods to kids
  + Make the program simple with few rules and regulations (remember that you’re asking them to do something extra)
  + Be mindful of cultural differences
  + Food raise creatively and distribute creatively (putting bags into kids’ backpacks as they load the bus)

**Q&A**

***1. Can you coordinate with bakeries for bread? Kids can make sandwiches.***

Jon- Our bread is donated by retail partners. We utilize excess food rather than choice foods. We haven’t found a way to partner with bakeries, but it is something everyone should explore.