

What is Empty Bowls?

An annual fundraising event which is the sole funding source for the New Richmond School District's Happy Kids Backpack Program. This program provides backpacks of food to families under financial hardship every Friday of the school year. The intention is for the food to nourish children over the weekend when school meals are not available. Times continue to be financially tough for many families in our local area. This is even more evident now with the financial hardships brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic. In the current 2020-2021 school year the New Richmond Happy Kids Backpack program is providing around 80 backpacks to students each week! The cost for each backpack is approximately \$8.50 to \$12.50. These funds support over 300 family members and we only expect our community and the need of our support to grow. Our fundraising event is organized by volunteers and runs on a zero administrative budget. Services and products are donated at little or no cost so that all of the money raised can help others.

The name "Empty Bowls" is used for hunger based fundraising efforts across the globe. It started in 1990 with a high school art teacher in Michigan who helped his students plan a fundraising project to support a food drive. What evolved was a class project to make ceramic bowls for a fundraising meal. By the following year this concept developed into "Empty Bowls," a project to provide support for food banks, soup kitchens and other organizations to fight hunger. The event became an event where a guest would choose a bowl and then be offered a simple meal such as soup with bread. Since then, Empty Bowls events have been held throughout the world, and millions of dollars have been raised to combat hunger through them. Organizations such as the American Red Cross, America's Second Harvest, Hunger Action and Food First are just a few of the many organizations fighting hunger worldwide, and these organizations along with a number of local ones have benefited from students and community members working together to fight hunger.

For our New Richmond event, New Richmond School District students and community members have created ceramic bowls to support our event. The first New Richmond Empty Bowls event was held in 2007. This year we are celebrating 14 years of fundraising efforts!