



In photo above Superintendent Matt Cook, left, with three of the six local “Blessings In A Backpack” volunteers Tanya Hasseler, Chrissie Kent and Jill Nittolo after they received the 2016 Newark Central School District “Friend of Education Award.”

*“Thank You”  
“Blessings In A Backpack”  
For Being Such A Good Friend*

During the 2015-16 school year, some 6,000 bags of food were lovingly assembled by six extraordinarily caring women so that by year’s end, 180 eligible students from Kelley, Perkins and Lincoln schools could tuck them into their backpacks on Friday afternoons to ensure they wouldn’t go hungry during the weekend.

And for this amazing feat and their pledge to pack food bags for up to 205 students a week during the upcoming school year, the “Blessings In A Backpack” volunteers received the 2016 Newark Central School District “Friend of Education” award at an early morning assembly August 31<sup>st</sup>.

The award is given annually to an individual, organization or business that goes the extra mile to support Newark education.

Superintendent Matt Cook said was very pleased to be able present the award to the “Blessings In A Backpack” volunteers because these dedicated and committed women far exceeded the criteria for the award.

He noted that each year in the process of deciding what individual or organization should receive the award, there are many names to choose from. But he said this year, when various possible award winners were being considered, those involved in the decision without hesitation just said “Yep” when the “Blessings In A Backpack” volunteers

were mentioned.

“It was a very easy decision this year,” Cook said, noting the volunteers plan to pack 8,000 bags this year.

Cook told three of the volunteers Tanya Hasseler, who spearheaded the Newark program and two other Newark volunteers Chrissie Kent and Jill Nittolo \_ he was thrilled to present the “Blessings In A Backpack” volunteers with the award. Volunteers Melissa Kelley, Kelli Ransco and Robin Granger were unable to attend.

Speaking on behalf of all the volunteers, Kent thanked Cook for allowing them to bring the program into the Newark Schools.

“It wouldn’t have happened without your support,” she said and also thanked the entire NCSD staff its support of the program.



The inscription on the award reads:

*FOR YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT OF THE  
STUDENTS AND FAMILIES OF OUR DISTRICT.*

*YOU ARE SUCH A WONDERFUL ASSET  
TO OUR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY.*

*YOUR ORGANIZATION PROVIDES FOOD TO MANY OF OUR FAMILIES, WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE GO HUNGRY ON THE  
WEEKENDS.*

*WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT.*

Before the award was presented Hasseler noted 25 more students each week will received food bags in 2016-17 thanks to a grant the local “Blessings In A Backpack” program is receiving from the Dale Earhart Jr. Foundation.

Appreciative of the Friend of Education award the local program was about to receive from the school district Hasseler said it was “very nice,” but said the volunteers were not expecting any recognition for their work. “We just do it . . . because . . .” she said with a smile.

Kent agreed.

“All of us were surprised (to learn about receiving the Friend of Education award), but we don’t do this for rewards,” she said.

Similarly, Nittolo said the volunteers are hoping the recognition will help raise awareness about the program and the need that exists locally.

Read more about the local “Blessings In A Backpack” program here: [http://newarkcsd.org/cms/lib07/NY01000239/Centricity/Domain/630/National CEO of Blessings In A Backpack Pleased with Newark program.pdf](http://newarkcsd.org/cms/lib07/NY01000239/Centricity/Domain/630/National_CEO_of_Blessings_In_A_Backpack_Pleased_with_Newark_program.pdf)