

An initiative of Our Father's Hope, a 501(c)3 planting seeds of hope for vulnerable children in Central PA and those tasked with caring for them.



# BACKPACKS OF HOPE

## Our Start

BOH was started in 2014 by then 10 year old Eden King. The year before, her family was adopting a baby in a NICU. While in the waiting room, Eden was given an activity bag made by a local Girl Scout troop. She wondered how she could start something similar. Because of her family's involvement in foster care, she decided to create something to help this population.

## Why?

When children enter foster care, they often do so with little to nothing to call their own. If the child has anything to take into his new home, it's usually shoved into a garbage bag. On the other end, foster families often don't know the age or gender of a child coming into their home until just before the child arrives. Having a backpack with supplies and comfort items gives the child something to call her own and helps the new family with everything a child would need for the first night, giving them time with the child rather than needing to run to the store right away.

## What goes in a bag?

Each bag contains pajamas, a blanket, a stuffed animal, toiletries, and a flashlight. Then the bag is stuffed full of anything else appropriate for a child or teen of that age: school supplies, coloring book and crayons, card game, toy, book, underwear, socks, hat and gloves, a new outfit, etc. BOH accepts donations at any time in Mechanicsburg at Finished Effects Hair Salon, The Cracked Pot, McBIC Youth Center, and Planted in Play or in Dillsburg at the Baltimore St. State Farm office. The Lebanon County donation site is Ono United Methodist Church. You can donate just one item or a complete backpack. We will tag them and donate to Central PA CYS offices.



In its first year, Backpacks of Hope partnered with 1 county in Central PA, donating a total of 68 backpacks for their case workers to give to children entering foster care. Since then we have added 4 more county CYS offices and Safe Families to our partnership. Between 2014 and 2018, more than 1,000 backpacks have been donated to children in need.

**How can you help? See the other side...**