# [**https://www.itemlive.com/2021/02/22/anchor-food-pantry-collects-snacks-for-hungry-students/**](https://www.itemlive.com/2021/02/22/anchor-food-pantry-collects-snacks-for-hungry-students/)

# **ANCHOR FOOD PANTRY COLLECTS SNACKS FOR HUNGRY STUDENTS**

BY [TRÉA LAVERY](https://www.itemlive.com/author/tlavery/)| February 22, 2021

SWAMPSCOTT — Anchor Food Pantry is collecting donations to send snack packages to students in Swampscott and Nahant.

The snacks will be distributed to teachers to make them available to students who need them during snack time, and are meant to last for the rest of the school year.

“We were talking about how (teachers) will keep extra snacks in their drawer because inevitably, there are kids that just aren’t sent to school with snacks,” said Diane O’Brien, treasurer at the food pantry. “I found that completely outrageous that our teachers are feeding our kids and that they’re spending their own money.”

O’Brien explained that for many students, a snack is an important energy boost that is key to focusing and learning, but not every family can afford to send daily snacks to school with their child. While many of these families qualify for free breakfast and lunch programs, snack time is not covered.

She said that Brandon Lewis, a board member at the food pantry and Swampscott Middle School teacher, had made a habit of slipping snacks into certain students’ lockers to discreetly make sure they didn’t go hungry. By making sure all teachers have snacks available, O’Brien hopes that the fear of embarrassment or shame will be eliminated.

“There’s no judgement,” she said. “Any child can go to any teacher and get a snack.”

The snack packages will be distributed to elementary and middle schools in Swampscott and Nahant. Swampscott High School declined to participate, as they are working in a hybrid remote and in-person system, and high school students do not have a set snack time.

The food pantry is accepting donations of food through their Amazon wish list or monetary donations through PayPal, with a memo mentioning the snack program. Donations can also be dropped off in-person at the Swampscott Senior Center, although O’Brien said the pantry prefers them to be purchased directly through Amazon, as the snacks identified on the wishlist are healthy and nut-free. More information can be found on Anchor Food Pantry’s website, anchorfoodpantry.org.

Anchor Food Pantry opened last year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have held several food distribution events since then to feed the community.

O’Brien said that local residents have already been very generous, and she has no doubt they will be able to provide enough snacks to students.

“I guarantee you, there are at least three cases of snacks sitting on Laura’s (Spathanas, president of Anchor Food Pantry) porch right now,” she said. “We put out the need to the community and they show up every time.”