

## A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TO HELP HUNGRY KIDS

The Old Dominion Dames and the Ocean Ridge Charities Association (ORCA) teamed up in early August on a community service project to help fight child hunger in Brunswick County where it is a major problem

According to the latest statistics nearly 65% of school aged children are currently receiving federally-subsidized, free or reduced priced meals at their neighborhood schools. In a couple of elementary schools that rate exceeds 80%! While that federal program takes care of the kids when they are in school, it doesn't help on weekends where under nourishment is a continuing problem. And that's exactly where the group Matthews' Ministry steps in.

A local, Southport-based, non-profit founded by a young mom--Kristie Disbrow--provides take-home backpacks to children filled with non-perishable food. What began just three years ago at a couple of schools with a small number of children has quadrupled into 15 schools and nearly 600 kids. Food is collected from various sources, delivered by volunteers to the schools and then packaged on-site by teachers, counselors and other volunteers for Friday distribution. The backpacks are returned by the kids on Mondays and cycle begins anew.

Earlier this year ORCA made a \$500 contribution to support the work of Matthews' Ministry—a donation that was matched dollar for dollar by the Feinstein Foundation. More recently, thanks to the leadership of ORCA board members Larry Gray and Barbara Ellenberger, the Ocean Ridge community stepped up in an even bigger way. Partnering with the Old Dominion Dames (chaired by Barbara), the two groups collected some 87 backpacks with food for the initial in-school, backpack distribution effort for the fall semester.

In late August, the Old Dominion Dames and ORCA delivered some 51 backpacks directly to Jesse Mae Elementary School in Calabash; the remaining 36 backpacks were sent on to Mathews' Ministry for general distribution. Overall, 550 backpacks were collected countywide with Ocean Ridge supplying over 15% of the total.



Left to Right: Pat Dailey (Old Dominion Dame/), Barbara Ellenberger (Old Dominion Dame/ORCA), Faye Arvonio (Old Dominion Dame), Rick Arvonio (Ocean Ridge), Principal David Cupolo, Larry Gray (ORCA), Jeanne Gray (Old Dominion Dame), Sharyn Morrison (School Counselor), and Chris McIntyre (School Counselor)

On behalf of “the Dames”, ORCA and Matthews’ Ministry, a heartfelt thanks to all of those Ocean Ridge households that bought the backpacks and filled them with food for needy kids. FYI, the two Ocean Ridge groups are continuing their support the Ministry by picking up food at their food pantry in Southport one week a month and delivering it to Jesse Mae. Overall, there are some 80 children at Jesse Mae Monroe receiving weekly backpacks. If you want to lend a hand, contact Larry Gray, ORCA liaison to Matthews’ Ministry. For more information about the organization go to [www.matthewsministry.com](http://www.matthewsministry.com)

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