

# Walk for Hunger returns with boost in support

By **John P. Muldoon** - April 19, 2022



*Sarah Grow (left) and Julie LaFontaine cheer on the students as they leave for their walk.*

IPSWICH — By the time seventh-grader Andrew Young took the first step of his 10-mile walk, his wallet was \$1,100 lighter.

A prodigious fundraiser, the middle-school student raised the money for the return of this year's Walk for Hunger Friday morning.

"I've never really done anything like it before," Young said. "I didn't expect it to be the highest amount raised. It just felt good, knowing I was helping my community."

The long walk, from the school to the Neck and back, is one of the middle school's signature events. However, COVID put the kibosh on it for a couple of years. 2022 marked its return after the pandemic.

The walk has been a tradition for more than a decade, said school counselor and student helper.

She said students went door to door, campaigning in downtown. "They were so dedicated," Bevilacqua said.



With just three grades in the middle school — sixth, seventh, and eighth — and two years of COVID disruption, 2022 marked the first time any of the students got to experience the full group walk.



*From left: Open Door President and CEO Julie LaFontaine, seventh grade student Colin Ramey, Principal Kathy McMahon, and seventh grade student Andrew Young (photo courtesy of The Open Door)*

The 2021 event was canceled, and 2020's was a socially distanced walk for which students raised money online.

This year's goal was to raise \$10,000 for the **Open Door Food Pantry**. The students blew that away and came in with more than \$18,000.

"Everyone is feeling the pinch in their lives," said Julie LaFontaine, Open Door's executive director, who stood at the school entrance to cheer the students on. "This walk is timely help to support the Ipswich community food pantry," she added.

Based in Gloucester, the Open Door has an distributed 286,000 pounds of food to 813 p





*From left: Seventh grade students Olivia Leary, Adriana Hardy, Sarah Boroff, and Joselyn Ocasio. Students were encouraged to take fruit from The Open Door Mobile Market Farmers Truck after the approximately 10-mile Walk for Hunger. (Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*

However, the organization as a whole helped 8,516 people from 4,176 households through the distribution of 1.83 million pounds of food in 2021.

Saying she was “extremely proud” of the students, Principal Kathy McMahon added, “The IMS Walk for Hunger is a long-standing tradition of our school, showing students that they can make a difference and inspire change. ”

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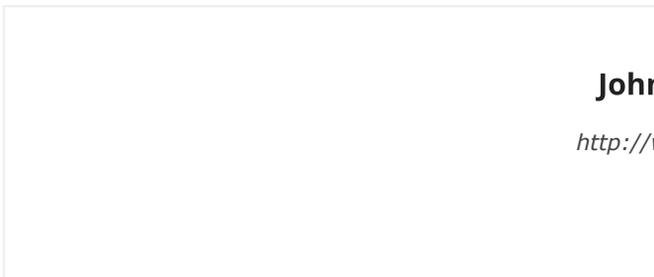
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