

## Fallon Park School Pack-A-Snack Program

The Rotary Club of Roanoke-Downtown received a District Grant to help support a new community service project in partnership with Fallon Park Elementary School. The pack-a-snack program was initiated with the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year at this inner city school.

As the school qualifies to provide free lunch for all students, the Fallon Park PTA recognized the need to also provide students with free food for consumption over the weekend. Medical research has shown that those children deprived of nutrients and calories for long periods of time such as over the weekend demonstrate inhibited cognitive and physical abilities all week. This project allows for 120 students to be provided with weekend nutrition each month. Each pack contains food approved for student consumption by the United States Department of Agriculture guidelines, and is approved by the principal and school food service. All the foods are ready to eat, not needing refrigeration, and are securely wrapped.

Roanoke Downtown Club members assisted by members of the Blue Ridge New Generations Rotary Club and PTA members meet once a month at the school to pack the bags to be distributed to the children by the school staff during the after school program. All children attending the after school program are eligible for participation in pack-a-snack. This distribution method avoids any apparent discrimination and insures that the food is directed to those children truly in need of this special assistance.

The first pack-a-snack work detail was conducted on August 27, 2015. Members of the Downtown and New Generations Clubs enjoyed the fellowship while accomplishing the project's goal of assisting children in need of weekend nourishment. The District grant plays an essential role in making this club-school project a reality. The students of Fallon Park School will be better prepared to learn during 2015-2016 because of this innovative Rotary service project.

