



2025 Impact Report



*Spreading joy, hope & essential resources to children in
Fredericksburg*





A Note from Our Founder

When we started Spreading Smiles out of Ristorante Renato during the uncertainty of COVID-19, we simply wanted to help. We saw children in our community who suddenly didn't have access to school meals, and we knew we had to do something.

Ristorante Renato has been part of this community for over 47 years, and this nonprofit was our way of giving back to the families who have supported us for generations.

What began as a small effort to provide meals has grown into something far greater than we ever imagined.

Today, Spreading Smiles supports hundreds of children each week with weekend meal bags, along with coats, shoes, backpacks, and holiday meals — ensuring that every child we reach feels cared for, supported, and not forgotten. At the heart of everything we do is a simple belief: no child should miss out on the magic of being a kid because of circumstances beyond their control.

Because when basic needs aren't met, childhood looks different. It can mean worrying about food instead of playing, feeling left out instead of included, or carrying burdens no child should have to carry. Our goal is to help change that — one bag, one coat, one small act of kindness at a time.

This work is only possible because of our incredible community. From our volunteers and school partners to our donors and local businesses, Spreading Smiles is truly powered by people who believe that every child deserves dignity, support, and the chance to just be a kid.

As we continue to grow, our mission remains the same: to meet children where they are, remove barriers, and bring a little more stability — and joy — into their lives.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

With gratitude,

Elisa Bonilla

Founder & Executive Director, Spreading Smiles at Renatos

"No child should miss out on the magic of being a kid because of circumstances beyond their control."



Our Mission

To provide food, essential resources, and support to children in need — so they can feel cared for, supported, and free to just be kids.

Through programs that provide weekend meal bags, gifts, school supplies, clothing, and essential items, we're committed to creating stability and opportunity for every child we serve — regardless of their circumstances.

Serving 32 schools across Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and King George

Why It Matters

Every child deserves to experience the full joy of childhood. But for many in our community, financial hardship makes that impossible — worrying about food instead of playing, or arriving at school without the basics they need to learn. We believe no child should face that alone.

"One of the students we serve lives in a motel with their family. Their school counselor shared that before receiving Weekend Buddy Bags, Mondays were the hardest days — they'd come in hungry and unable to focus. Now, they come to school ready to learn."

— School Counselor, Fredericksburg City Schools

About Us

For years, Ristorante Renato has been working closely with local school social workers and community organizations to provide programs that meet the immediate needs of children and families in our community. In 2024, with the support of our ownership and patrons, **Spreading Smiles was officially established** to expand these initiatives and continue fulfilling our mission.

Spreading Smiles is a **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization** dedicated to supporting children and families in Fredericksburg and surrounding counties. We are **100% volunteer-run**, and with operational support provided by Ristorante Renato, **95% of every donation goes directly to children in need.**





Our Impact

Every number represents a child who was seen, supported, and cared for.



With operational support provided by Ristorante Renato, 95% of every donation goes directly to children — made possible because we are 100% volunteer-run.

2025 in Numbers



+ Hundreds of backpacks & school supplies distributed to children in shelters, hotels & transitional housing across the Fredericksburg region.



Our Programs

Meal Programs for Children

Spreading Smiles makes sure kids don't go hungry when school is out. Every weekend, over 950 children take home a buddy bag packed with kid-friendly meals and snacks. When schools close unexpectedly, our restaurant steps in with hot pasta meals. During the summer, we keep the support going so kids can enjoy their break without the worry of food insecurity.

Since February 2025, we've already distributed more than 21,000 weekend meal bags — bringing comfort, nourishment, and stability to local children all year long.



Buddy Bags packed and ready (left) and what's inside each one (right) — nutritious food kids can count on every weekend.

Kicks For Kids

Every step counts — especially for a child starting school with confidence. Through our New Shoes Initiative Spreading Smiles has provided over 400 pairs of brand-new shoes — including name brands like Nike and Adidas — to children living in transitional housing, shelters, and hotels across our region.

Thanks to partnerships with Good360 and the support of generous community donors, we're making sure that every child can walk into the classroom with dignity — and shoes that fit.



Fitting a child with new shoes, shoes ready for distribution, and our Good360 partnership in action.



■ Emergency Clothing Support

Spreading Smiles provides emergency clothing for children and teens in need, working with referrals from school counselors and social workers. We keep a small inventory of essentials including shirts, pants, socks, undergarments, and especially coats and gloves in the winter.

This year we have already provided over 700 coats thanks to our partnership with Operation Warm and supporters of Sips for a Cause. This program is coordinated directly with schools and is not open to the general public.

■ Backpacks for Success

Every child deserves to start the school year with confidence — and that includes having a sturdy backpack filled with the tools they need to learn, grow, and thrive. Through our Backpack for Success initiative, Spreading Smiles has distributed over 800 fully stocked backpacks to children living in shelters, hotels, and transitional housing across the Fredericksburg region.



Backpacks lined up and ready — every one fully stocked with school supplies.

■ Summer Activities

We bring the fun directly to shelters, transitional housing programs, and underserved neighborhoods by hosting Summer Fun Events — including cookouts with hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and ice cream, plus arts & crafts and goodie bags for each child.



Spreading Smiles volunteers bring fun and joy to kids at the Brisben Center.



■ Thanksgiving Meals for Underserved Families

In 2025, we provided 1,910 warm Thanksgiving meals to families in need, ensuring they could enjoy a holiday feast together. We delivered over 1,100 of those meals thanks to our dedicated volunteers.



Hundreds of pumpkin pie slices prepared for Thanksgiving meal deliveries.

■ Holiday Gifts for Children

In 2025, we helped brighten the holidays for nearly 600 children by providing gifts to families facing financial hardship. Thanks to the incredible support of Amazon, we were able to create an unforgettable Night on Main Street for 100 children — meeting Santa, sipping hot chocolate, ice skating, and hands-on STEM activities. For many of these children, it was their first time experiencing the magic of the season in this way.



A child meets Santa at our Night on Main Street — a magical moment made possible by your generosity.

■ Easter Baskets for Children

This year we provided 550 Easter baskets to children battling cancer, homelessness, or other difficult circumstances — bringing them a sense of comfort and celebration.



Powered by Our Community

Spreading Smiles is powered by people who show up. From volunteers who spend their mornings packing bags, to families who drop off coats, to school counselors who make sure the right kids are reached — this work belongs to all of us.

Every weekend meal, every pair of shoes, every backpack, and every holiday moment is made possible by a community that refuses to look the other way. We've seen firsthand what happens when people come together with one goal: to make sure no child feels forgotten.



Our incredible volunteer community — showing up together to pack bags and spread smiles.

Our Community Partners & Supporters

We are grateful for the support of community partners, local businesses, and organizations who help us grow and reach more children each year:

- Amazon (Rappahannock Region Community Fund)
- Dominion Energy
- Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
- Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region
- Walmart Spark Good
- Feed the Children
- Good360
- Operation Warm
- Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank
- MetroNova
- Turner Construction
- Mary Washington Healthcare Foundation

But at the heart of everything we do is something bigger than any one name — it's a community that continues to show up, again and again, for the kids who need it most.



How You Can Help

There are so many ways to be part of Spreading Smiles — and every single one makes a difference.



The Spreading Smiles team out in the community — bringing smiles wherever we go.

■ Donate

Just **\$5 feeds a child for the weekend. \$100 feeds 20 children.** Your donation goes directly to food, supplies, and programs. Give once or become a monthly supporter.

■ Volunteer

From packing Weekend Buddy Bags to helping with seasonal programs — there's a place for everyone. Whether you come once or every week, **your time matters.** Join us for an upcoming volunteer day.

■ Give Items

We are always collecting: **Shelf-stable food • New shoes • Coats • Hygiene items • School supplies.** Every item goes directly into the hands of a child who needs it.

■ Shop Our Wishlist

The easiest way to help from home. Choose items directly from our Amazon Wishlist and have them shipped to us. Shop & send in just a few clicks.

■ Spread the Word

Share our posts. Tell a friend. Bring someone with you to volunteer. **The more people who know, the more kids we can reach.**

■ Partner With Us

We welcome partnerships with businesses, organizations, and community groups. Together, we can reach even more children across our region.

SPREADING SMILES

at renatos

Because of you, we say yes.

Again and again.

To the children who need us most.



www.spreadingsmilesfxbg.org



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Spreading Smiles at Renatos • 501(c)(3) Nonprofit • Fredericksburg, VA