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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Manna Food Project is honored to receive a \$50,000 grant from The A.A. Van Elslander Foundation for the Food 4 Kids backpack program.

The grant funding will be used to purchase food for the Food 4 Kids backpack program. The backpacks of food are distributed to children in need throughout Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet Counties.

One in eight children in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet Counties lives in a household where there is inconsistent access to healthy food. As a result, many children face challenges at school. Manna offers help by partnering with 30 preschools and elementary schools to send home kid friendly shelf-stable healthy food options to children for the weekends. Children receive a Manna "backpack" of food going home Friday after school. With the help of dietitians and student surveys, we frequently update the contents in the backpacks to make sure they are healthy, and kid approved. When a child does not get enough to eat it puts them at a serious disadvantage. Children facing hunger are more likely to have health conditions. Nutritionally, hunger can take a toll on children's cognitive development – equally harmful is the constant stress and anxiety associated with hunger. Children may have to repeat a grade, or experience developmental impairments, and can often display behavioral problems.

The Manna Food Project is grateful to organizations like The A.A. Van Elslander Foundation to help support the mission of feeding people in need throughout Northern Michigan. Together, we can build a stronger community and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

About The A.A. Van Elslander Foundation

The A.A. Van Elslander Foundation was established in 2016 by Mr. Art Van Elslander. As one of Michigan's most respected businessmen and generous philanthropists, his commitment to helping others was a cornerstone of his life's values, and defines our philanthropic agenda, providing support to Michigan-based charities benefiting children, health and human services. For more information: www.vanelslanderfoundation.org.

About the Manna Food Project

The Manna Food Project's mission is to feed people throughout the north by gathering, organizing, and distributing food (the most nutritious food possible) to those in need throughout Antrim, Charlevoix and Emmet Counties.

