

***Photos of New Board Members Attached**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Blessings in a Backpack Welcomes New Members to National Board of Directors
Christine Cocrane, Tim Cox, Gwen High, and Dawn Melchiorre
to sit on the 2023-2024 National Board

CITY, St. – Blessings in a Backpack, the only national organization solely dedicated to feeding kids on the weekend, is pleased to announce the election of four new members to the National Board of Directors: Christine “Chrissy” Cocrane, Timothy “Tim” Cox, Gwendolyn “Gwen” High, and Dawn Melchiorre. The four board members from Illinois, Virginia and North Carolina bring decades of leadership, dedicated knowledge, and a passion for volunteerism to the organization that will advance mission-delivery and grow impact.

“These four industry leaders are a valuable addition to our National Board of Directors,” said Erin Kerr, CEO, Blessings in a Backpack. “They bring fresh perspectives, diverse expertise, and renewed energy to our mission of easing weekend hunger for school-aged children nationwide. We are thrilled to have their experience and thought leadership as we strategically grow our organization to meet the weekend hunger gap.”

Chrissy Cocrane is a McLean, Virginia native and Senior Vice President, Management Advisory Services at LMI, a consultancy providing emerging technology expertise with extensive federal experience to develop creative solutions. Cocrane leads a diverse practice of more than 800 strategists and consultants focused on large-scale transformations. Her team supports broad federal industries, including healthcare, defense, homeland security, space, national security, and citizen services.

Tim Cox resides in Chicago, Illinois and is the current U.S. General Counsel and Chief Regulatory Officer at BMO Financial Group, where he is responsible for the overall leadership and performance of the U.S. legal and regulatory compliance function and for managing regulatory

risk throughout the enterprise. Before joining the bank, Cox was an attorney at Vedder Price P.C., a Chicago-based law firm, advising on regulatory matters, negotiating regulatory enforcement actions, and assisting financial institutions with corporate governance matters.

Gwen High is Executive Director of StriveCLT, a social impact non-profit focused on providing upward mobility opportunities for underserved residents of Charlotte, North Carolina, where she resides. She served as Vice President of Community Relations for the Aramark K-12 Education business. As a 17-year company veteran, she developed the community relations platform for their K-12 line of business and provided the vision and leadership for community involvement and engagement of Aramark's on-site management teams for hundreds of school district clients nationwide.

Dawn Melchiorre is the Executive Director of Cradles to Crayons Chicago, a program that provides children from birth through age 12 living in homeless or low-income situations with the essential items to thrive at home, school and play for free. She started her nonprofit career in her home state at Voices for Illinois Children building successful advocacy campaigns focused on early childhood education, mental health and child food and nutrition. Melchiorre then served as Chief Operating Officer of Forefront in Illinois, a regional membership association serving grantmakers, nonprofits, advisors, and public agencies.

Blessings in a Backpack is governed by the National Board of Directors composed of volunteer corporate, civic, and community leaders that make up the 12-member board. The board's primary responsibilities are governance oversight, fiduciary accountability, and providing strategic direction of organizational priorities through collaborative engagement with the senior leadership team.

For more information on Blessings in a Backpack's board of directors, visit <https://www.blessingsinabackpack.org/board-and-staff/>.

ABOUT BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Did you know that 9 million children in the United States are experiencing food insecurity? That's one in eight kids who may be struggling with access to food. Federal government programs feed students during the school week, but what about the weekends? Since 2005, Blessings in a Backpack, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has been committed to mobilizing communities, individuals and resources to provide food on the weekends for elementary students across the country who might otherwise go hungry. During the 2022–2023 school year, Blessings in a Backpack distributed more than 3.3 million bags of ready-to-eat food to children at 1,270 schools in 46 states and the District of Columbia. To learn more about Blessings in a Backpack, visit <http://www.blessingsinabackpack.org/>.

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