

# The Santa Fe Homeless Backpack Project

Part of the Global Homeless Backpack Network

[www.HomelessBackpack.net](http://www.HomelessBackpack.net)

This is my version of a project taking root in the U.S. and around the world. I was inspired by the Tacoma, Washington couple who posted a video about it on YouTube.com, entitled “Homeless Backpack Care Kit”.



## The Concept:

To fill backpacks to be given away to homeless people or others in need, for free, which contain basic living and survival items. Examples of the kinds of things included are:

- A few specialized clothing items - watch caps, gloves, socks, etc.
- Survival gear - duct tape, emergency ‘space’ blankets, hand warmers, etc.
- Hygiene items - toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, hairbrush, etc.
- Food - eating utensils, cans of food, power bars, bottled water, etc.

## In Practice:

All of the above plus much more (the full list is available) is packed in a medium-sized, nondescript backpack and given, for free, to those in need who I meet along the way. I keep a couple of backpacks in my car at all times to offer to anyone who is obviously lacking. There is no proselytization or even a requirement for the receivers to interact. Social intercourse is often difficult for people in dire straits and this should not disqualify them from receiving a pack. I simply explain that it is a totally free gift and contains good, useable stuff which they can keep or pass on, no strings attached. Not everyone opts to take one but once they do, I don't hang around to monitor what they do with it. Respectfully, I give them their space and go on my way. On the few occasions I have received feedback, it has been very gratifying.

Personal safety and self-respect are two things which dominate the lives of the disadvantaged. Homeless people must remain inconspicuous in order to survive, in society and in places like hostels and shelters. Bright, showy or expensive items will be stolen or could cause worse trouble for them. Consequently, the packs and contents must be of subdued colors and look as much like street fare as possible while still being practical and of good quality.

Self-respect is probably the most important gift we can give them. This means no junk in our packs. While they have to be made inexpensively, it's important to take time to find and choose the best quality items we can afford, items which will not break, which will do their job and not disappoint. The original Tacoma homeless backpack project's target cost per pack was \$20 total, including the (used) pack. My cost is probably closer to \$30 and I am happy with that. I've expanded the original item list and I make sure each item is serviceable even if it has to cost a little more.

## Your Assistance:

I fund this project myself and am happy doing this. I can invest in it a few dollars at a time until I have enough to make a few packs. There are a some upgrades I hope to add to the packs in the future and those will come in their time.

Some friends have generously offered to help with this which gave me the idea that the whole thing could move along more quickly if more people were involved. As winter is setting in, these packs are even more valuable to those without homes, many of whom are sleeping outside. I'd like to get as many packs as possible out there this winter so I'm inviting anyone who would like to help to do so. Here's how:

**Give money:** I'm not a registered charity or an LLC so I can't give you receipts for this. You could, however, if you are willing to donate enough, accompany me on a buying trip around town and watch me spend your money. This way you can see where it is going.

**Give items:** The other way you can help is to buy and donate some of the actual items I need for the packs. Below is a list of the contents of a backpack. These items are pretty universal and what you would choose will probably be pretty similar to what I would buy. Remember, the best quality we can afford.

Please **don't** donate things which are not on the list. It's taken some time to come up with a concise pack list which works for everyone and obviously, space is limited. Please don't offer clothing other than the few items listed below. If you have any questions about anything, of course, contact me.

So, that's the story. I appreciate all the help my friends have offered to this point. Having had some experience with homelessness, I know that small things can mean a lot to people on the edge and just the idea that somebody has taken the time to care and treat them with kindness can make a big difference in someone's day.

Best of everything,

David Goldberg  
Santa Fe Homeless Backpack Project  
HomelessBackpack.net Global Site  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
info@homelessbackpack.net

# Santa Fe Homeless Backpack Project, Complete Contents List

06/06/2015

<u>No.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Need</u>
	<i>Clothes</i>		
1.	Backpack	1	
2.	Watch cap	1	
3.	Scarf (winter only)	1	
4.	Gloves	1	
5.	Socks, large (Hanes @ Walmart)	2 pr.	
6.	Sun Glasses	1	
	<i>Survival</i>		
7.	Emergency blanket	1	
8.	Hand warmer packets (winter only)	4	
9.	Duct tape, small roll	1	
10.	Safety pins	5	
11.	Paper and pen, Magic Marker	1 ea.	
12.	Ear plugs	1 pr.	
13.	Playing Cards	1	
	<i>Hygiene</i>		
14.	Microfiber washcloth	1	
15.	Tooth brush	1	
16.	Tooth paste	1	
17.	Deodorant	1	
18.	Soap bar	2-3	
19.	Tampax, 3 sizes	1 of each	
20.	Shampoo	1	
21.	Razor (disposable)	3	
22.	Nail clippers	1	
23.	Hairbrush	1	
24.	Hand sanitizer	8	
25.	Toilet paper, sm.	1	
26.	Laundry soap	1	
	<i>Food</i>		
27.	Plastic spoons, forks	2 ea.	
28.	Can opener	1	
29.	Canned beans	2	
30.	Peanut butter, large	1	
31.	Canned chicken	2	
32.	Canned tuna	2	
33.	Vienna sausage	2	
34.	Apple sauce or fruit cups	2	
35.	Saltine crackers	2 pkg.	
36.	Peanut butter cookies	2 pkg.	
37.	Granola, Power bars	2	
38.	Juice box	2	
39.	Bottle water	2	