

# The Telegraph

## Backpack program should benefit Manchester schools

By Staff | Sep 25, 2021

MANCHESTER – The Friends of Aine, a nonprofit organization providing bereavement support services to grieving children, teens and families, launched its free Backpack Program this week with distribution to the Manchester School District.

Funded by the Bean Foundation, the backpacks include grief support tools students can use individually, or together with school community members, including teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, coaches, and support staff.

Friends of Aine held a virtual meeting with 38 Manchester School District staff members, including Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Gillis, principals, and vice principals to describe the contents of the backpacks and provide tutorials on how to use them.

There are certain resources and activities designed to stay at school, along with take home items for grieving students.

*“The ongoing and heartfelt partnership between the Manchester School District and Friends of Aine is truly remarkable. There is a collective passion for providing tools, support, and resources to support our school leadership teams and community,”* said Jennifer Gillis, Assistant Superintendent, of Operations for the Manchester School District.

“We are so appreciative of the backpacks, as they are an information and resource goldmine. I simply can’t say a big enough thank you for this partnership.”

The team kicked off backpack distribution with an outdoor visit to the Manchester School District, and then hand-delivered the resources to each of its elementary, middle, and high schools.

*“In New Hampshire, one in 13 children – approximately 20,000 – will experience the death of a parent or sibling by their 18th birthday,”* said Christine Phillips, Friends of Aine Co-Founder.

*“We developed the Backpack Program to help school community members address the complexities of childhood bereavement, and to have children feel supported in their grief.”*

For more information about Friends of Aine and its grief support services, visit [friendsofaine.com](http://friendsofaine.com).

Source: [Backpack program should benefit Manchester schools | News, Sports, Jobs - The Nashua Telegraph](#)