

DOING GOOD METRO ATLANTANS HELPING OTHERS



Cathy Smith (front left), Ginger Law, Kathy Harris, Tony Conway, Louise Kee, Kara Rumph, Tolton Pace, Harriet Hine and Anzlie Hine; and Kathy Adkins (back left), Jessica Inch, Michael Drake, Nell Benn, Rachel Cowart, Heather Pastrick, Allison Estapa, Ryan Weinrich, Jared Sulc, Rickey Smiley and Koren Sinnock distributed backpacks to more than 1,000 children at the Agape Community Center's Great Backpack Giveaway held Friday at the center's northwest Atlanta location.

Low-income youth receive backpacks

Group helps Agape Community Center distribute school bags.

By Devika Rao
For the AJC

More than 1,000 children and their parents lined up at the Agape Community Center on Friday for its annual Great Backpack Giveaway. Partnered with various businesses and community help, Agape collected backpacks and school supplies for the children of low-income families based in northwest Atlanta.

The community center collected more than 1,200 school bags distributed to children from kindergarten to 12th grade.

"As a group, we wanted to focus on education, so we collected backpacks for the community center," Cathy Smith, community service coordinator for the Network of Executive Women in Hospitality, said. "It is not only important for us to be exposed to different aspects of our community, but also to give back and be involved." NEWH donated and distributed backpacks on the day of the event.

"Through interaction with families, we noticed that this was becoming a need in our community," Executive Director Nell Benn said. "New backpacks and school supplies allow the students to start their school year on a positive and confident note."

By hosting events such as the Great Backpack Giveaway and providing services such as after-school programs, day programs for seniors, mentoring and emergency assistance for families, the 15-year-

old community center aims to end generational poverty through education.

"We want our families to have resources to live positively and our children to have a safe haven and path for a successful future," said Benn. For example, 100 percent of the participants involved in the center's Ginger Kaney Mentoring Institute graduated from high school.

Agape relies on the community to get involved in various ways. "We are always looking for tutors and mentors to be with our students," added Benn. Volunteering with meals and participating in special events such as the Thanksgiving Basket Drive are ways for large groups to give back to the community center.

"When someone offers their talents or time to Agape, whether it is every week or once a month, it makes a very positive impact on our families, children, and the community as a whole," she added.

To volunteer with the Agape Community Center, visit www.agapecc.org

In other news: The Rite Aid Foundation donated \$10,000 to the American Lung Association in Georgia. The grant will provide scholarships to low-income children to attend Camp Breathe Easy, a week-long summer camp where children learn how to live with and manage their asthma.

Who's doing good?

Each Tuesday, we write about the prior week's charity events such as fun-runs, volunteer projects and other community gatherings that benefit a good cause. To suggest an event for us to cover, contact Devika Rao at doing.goodAJC@gmail.com.