

## PRESS RELEASE

June 24, 2009

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### **Churches offer free backpacks stocked with school supplies**

Area churches will again be handing out 2,400 free backpacks stocked with school supplies during a series of events that begin in Ravenna on July 18, and end in Muskegon on August 29, 2009. Organizers expect an increased demand based on the struggling economy and high unemployment rate. The events at eight different sites are part of a county-wide effort to distribute FREE backpacks to preschool through 12th grade students who need them. Each of the churches serving as a distribution site will give out 300 backpacks filled with school supplies to the first 300 students accompanied by a parent or guardian. The students must be present to receive a backpack.

The backpack sites will offer resource fairs for families as well. Each fair will include different resources. Licensed hairdressers will offer \$2 haircuts at some sites. Health screenings including vision, hearing, lead, diabetes, and scoliosis screenings will be offered at some sites. Health and human service agencies will provide resources, and church specific information will be offered. All sites will offer something to eat in the form of a free lunch, dinner, or snack.

The cost of one backpack with supplies is approximately ten dollars. The two coordinating organizations, *Back-2-School* and *Lakeshore Backpacks for Kids*, are currently in the process of raising approximately \$24,000 in financial support needed through local businesses, churches, and private donors to help pay for the items.

*Lakeshore Backpacks for Kids* is made up of representatives from each of the participating six churches, local businesses, community agencies, community education directors, Head Start staff, and other early childhood and public school staff. The group sold coupon books earlier in the year to help raise some of the funding. In addition Ambrose Chiropractic, Community Shores Bank, Gordon Foods, Greater Muskegon Women's Club, Gundersen & Zuker, O.D., Hazekamp Meats, Howmet/Alcoa, L-3 Communications, Meijer Inc., and Wal-Mart Corporation have all provided financial support for the effort.

*Back-2-School*, operated by the volunteer staff at the Nazarene Community Resource Center, is responsible for two of the distribution sites at the Moorland and Eastwood campuses. They offered the first event of this kind back in 2001. The center has received financial support from Baker College, Choice One Bank, Community Shores Bank, Don Rea Post VFW, Hazekamp Meats, Johnson Technology, L3 Communications, Lakes Community Church of the Nazarene, Mabrito's Motors, Meijer Inc., Men's Auxiliary to VFW Post 8846, Williams and Company, LLC, and individuals. Grants for additional funds are pending.

**[Please see page 2 for dates, times, and locations]**

## **2009 Backpack Distribution Sites**

### **Back-2-School Sponsored by the Nazarene Community Resource Center**

**Saturday, July 18, 2009, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Moorland Campus: 1500 S. Moorland Road, Ravenna, MI 49451 (231) 773-2812

**Thursday, July 23, 2009, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

Eastwood Campus: 2270 S. Mill Iron Road, Muskegon, MI 49442 (231) 773-2812

### **Lakeshore Backpacks for Kids**

**Saturday August 1, 2009, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Holton United Methodist Church, 9530 Holton Duck Lake Road Holton, MI 49425 (231) 821-2323

**Saturday August 15, 2009, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Laketon Bethel Reformed Church, 1568 W. Giles Road, N. Muskegon, MI 49445 (231) 744-1749

**Thursday August 20, 2009, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

Lebanon Lutheran Church, 1101 S. Mears Whitehall, MI 49461 (231) 893-5745

**Saturday August 22, 2009, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Samuel Lutheran Church, 540 Houston Ave., Muskegon, MI 49441 (231) 722-7308

**Thursday August 27, 2009, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Mission for Area People, 2500 Jefferson, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444 (231) 733-9672

**Saturday August 29, 2009, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Great Lakes Kingdom Ministry, 32 E. Forest, Muskegon, MI 49444 (231) 726-4397

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