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BROOKLYN MEDIA GROUP/Photos by Jaime DeJesus

Jeanette Sanchez and Shawn Kelly at Reaching-Out Community Service's Big Backpack Giveaway.

By [Jaime DeJesus \(http://brooklynreporter.com/author/idejesus/\)](http://brooklynreporter.com/author/idejesus/) / [idejesus@brooklynreporter.com \(mailto:idejesus@brooklynreporter.com\)](mailto:idejesus@brooklynreporter.com) /

Friday, August 25, 2017 / 1:37 PM

It's back-to-school time and a local non-profit food pantry has once again provided kids and their families that are struggling financially with new supplies to gear up for their studies.

With the help of several sponsors, Reaching-Out Community Services hosted its annual Big Backpack Giveaway event on Thursday, August 24 outside its facility, 7708 New Utrecht Avenue.

Well before noon, a line that stretched around the block formed, with around 550 kids receiving free backpacks, notebooks, pads, pens and other supplies.

Executive Director of Reaching-Out Tom Neve stressed the important of these types of events. "Our goal is to eliminate hunger, and this helps our families that are struggling to put food on the table so they have less stress worrying about where they can find extra money to afford school supplies. That's why we do this," he said. "It's to help our neighbors in need."

(http://brooklynreporter.com/story/reaching-makes-back-school-easier-big-backpack-giveaway/img_4104-2/)



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He also added that there is a need throughout the borough to help the less fortunate. "Reaching-Out takes on the struggle of adopting almost 16 diverse zip code communities because there aren't any programs that are actually providing this in them," Neve added. "It's got to be the responsibility of the organization to try to provide something like this."

Help to make the event possible came from organizations such as the Food Bank for New York City, Project Hope New York, Target (which is opening up on 18th Avenue later this year), Ponce De Leon Federal Bank, Hampton Inn, mortgage broker John Manning, Fillmore Real Estate and State Senator Marty Golden's office.

"We made it work and the reason we were able to do so was because of the people who sponsor it, plain and simple," Neve said.

Lorraine A., a volunteer from Target, expressed her excitement. "It's great we're able to come into the community that we're opening in and give back," she said. "We're definitely excited."

"It helps me out a lot," said attendee Jeanette Sanchez. "I've doing this with them for them for years since the children were young. They're great. They help us all the time."

Attendee Angelina Leahy concurred. "I've been with them since 1996 and I come here for my food," she said. "Whenever we need help, food or guidance, they are always here for us and the backpacks are a great help. What they're doing is wonderful because some people can't afford school supplies. They built this place up into a family that helps people in need."



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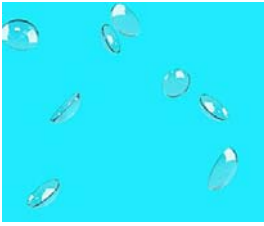


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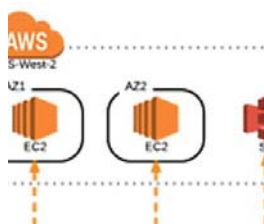
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