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By: Rowynn Ricks, Woodward News

Back 2 School Bash set

To help make going back to school a little easier on parents and a little more fun for the kids, Living Word Fellowship and the Woodward Area Coalition will once again be hosting their annual Back 2 School Family Fun Bash.

The event will be held on July 19 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Living Word Fellowship (LWF) church at 1310 Oklahoma Ave.

Jessica Nelson, LWF children's pastor and one of the event organizers, said that as always, the Back 2 School Bash is free and open to the public from all surrounding communities.

As part of the event, Nelson said several community organizations have been invited to host booths where they will offer fun activities such as a bean bag toss or fact painting for children to enjoy, while representatives of the organizations visit with the parents about the services they offer families.

There will be other fun and games for families to enjoy together as well, including a rock climbing wall, basketball shoot, slip-n-slide, and a giant version of the Twister game, she said.

Free hot dogs and drinks will also be provided to event attendees, Nelson said.

But most importantly, approximately 600 backpacks filled with basic school supplies will be given away to school children of all ages, she said.

These supplies include glue, crayons, pencils, pens, folders, and spiral notebooks; "just your general school supplies that most students need," she said.

However, Nelson said even these simple supplies can go a long way to helping families prepare for a new school year.

"If you have a family of 6 kids, then back to school time and buying all those school supplies can have a big financial impact on a family," she said. "So if we can help just a little bit, that's what we do this for, to help families. And we want to make sure kids get to go to school with the supplies they need."

In order to receive a free backpack, Nelson said families "just need to come in and register."

As part of the registration process, she said families are asked to provide information including an address, phone number and children's grade levels.

She said this helps Living Word Fellowship and the Woodward Area Coalition keep in touch with the families and let them know about future events they may like to participate in, such as sending out reminders when it comes time for next year's Back 2 School Bash.

"It's also good to know what communities we have people coming in from," she said, noting this helps organizers better prepare for the next year by getting supplies appropriate for the various school districts they are serving.

When picking up the backpacks, Nelson said "a child has to be present to receive the backpack."

She said this policy is intended to help ensure that the backpacks are distributed fairly.

If anyone is interested in helping with the Back 2 School Bash, Nelson said there are plenty of ways to get involved.

“We always need more volunteers to help with everything from manning the inflatable to handing out backpacks and even help setting up or tearing down,” she said.

There is also still booth space available for community organizations who would like to sponsor and activity for the children, she said.