



Back to School Drive helps more than 800 children

September 11, 2019

Starting a new school year can be stressful for parents and children alike, especially if the family situation means it's a challenge to start school with all the things the students need to be ready to learn.

The Laboratory's Back to School Drive helped meet that need in Northern New Mexico this year, with employees contributing more than 800 backpacks with school supplies and \$4,800 in donations for additional backpacks and supplies.

The contributions will go to students in need across the region in the following school districts:

- Española Public Schools
- San Ildefonso Day School (BIE)
- Bernalillo Public Schools
- Santa Fe Public Schools (Adelante)
- Pecos Independent School District
- Taos Municipal Schools
- Chama Valley Schools
- Pojoaque Valley School District
- Ohkay Owingeh Community School
- Taos Day School
- Jemez Mountain Public Schools
- Los Alamos Public Schools

Just some of the donated backpacks (filled with school supplies), waiting for collection by the schools.

"Many students from our district come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, while other students are living in challenging situations including in doubled up or in unstable housing or inadequate housing," says Anna Vargas Gutierrez, director of student wellness at Española Public Schools.

"The Lab employees' efforts truly support our community and students by providing these resources. Having these needed supplies helps to get them ready and excited to participate in learning."

Representatives from the schools and school districts received the backpacks and supplies just before school started and distributed them to the students most in need through school principals and counselors.

“Many of our students and their families cannot purchase supplies and the necessary items to use in the schools. Our students need to focus on their education and not on if they have supplies or not,” says Fred Trujillo, the superintendent of Pecos Independent School District.

“The students are so grateful for the backpacks and supplies. They know that they are important and that education is important. No kid should have to worry about having the necessary resources to be successful in our schools.”

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