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Nonprofits, others sponsor school supply drives

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By Shelia M. Poole
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

It's back to school soon for some metro Atlanta students.

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In 2010 volunteer Candace Schmidt waded through hundreds of backpacks before the 5th annual give a Kid a Chance back-to-school event in Canton.

Many families, though, don't have the money to get supplies such as pencils, notebooks, construction paper and backpacks. So, a number of businesses and nonprofits across the metro area are working to gather donations of these things and make sure they get to the children who need them.

Among those organizations is the Community Action Center, which works with schools in Sandy Springs and Dunwoody.

People can donate supplies or money. About \$50 fills a backpack with required supplies.

Executive Director Tamara Carrera said the goal is to be able to distribute supplies for any student who needs them.

"Sandy Springs is so well-known as a wealthy community; however, there are a lot of people

who live here who work in the service trade making minimum wage," she said. "It's also been hard with the economy the way it is, and so many families are left with very little. We know what they're going through."

Last year, the organization distributed 400 backpacks. This year, they expect that to double.

To donate, go to www.ourcac.org or call 770-552-4889.

The Latin American Association also is holding a school supply drive, which runs through Wednesday. The organization, which primarily serves the area's Latino community, is seeking volunteers to sort supplies and work during the group's shopping day on Aug. 6. The Latin American Association will hold the "back-to-school" shopping day at its offices, 2750 Buford

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Highway in Atlanta, for students in its programs and those at Sequoyah Middle School.

Items needed include notebooks, scientific calculators, pink and white erasers and geometry sets. For more information, call 404-471-1892.

"We specifically invite those students whom we know are in need," said spokeswoman Sarah Marske. "I think people definitely still need a helping hand." Last year, the drive helped more than 1,000 students. "One of our core areas of impact at the Latin American Association is youth academic achievement."

Other back-to-school initiatives include:

Greenbriar Mall, Everest College, Amerigroup and Wal-Mart will hold a Back to School Jam 2011 on Saturday and give away 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies.

The event will include live entertainment and a Kids Corner, with arts and crafts and giveaways. It will be at 11 a.m. at Greenbriar Mall, 2841 Greenbriar Parkway S.W. Preregistration begins at 9 a.m. near Burlington Court.

Cherokee County students who need supplies and backpacks can still get help from the sixth annual Give a Kid a Chance back-to-school drive, which was recently held in the county. Information: 770-241-8890.

Publix Super Markets is teaming up with United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta organizations, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Star 94 FM, V-103 FM and other businesses for the "School Tools for Cool Kids" project. Customers are encouraged to stop by their local Publix store through Aug. 14 to buy and/or drop off school supplies. Publix stores will have special bins. Twenty-one school systems will participate in this year's program. Items needed include pens, crayons, folders and rulers.

OneMain Financial Bank's 34 branches across Georgia will collect new school supplies during August. The supplies will be distributed to needy children served by the Salvation Army's local units across the state. Suggested items include lunch bags, erasers, markers, glue sticks and calculators.

Items can be dropped off at any OneMain Financial branch. For a complete listing of participating locations: www.salvationarmyatlanta.org.

Destiny Metropolitan Worship Church will hold its annual "Back 2 School" outreach event from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 6 at the church, 1775 Water Place in Atlanta. The day will include health screenings, food, haircuts and a giveaway of school supplies and backpacks. Preregistration is required for supplies and backpacks. To register: 770-509-9010 and ask for Ext. 612. The last day for preregistration is Saturday.

The sixth annual Backpack in the Park, a community picnic and back-to-school benefit event, will be held from 4 -7 p.m. Saturday in Piedmont Park. Last year, the event, sponsored by For the Kid in All of Us (www.forthekid.org), collected more than 1,600 backpacks, filled with school supplies and gift cards. There will be free food and beverages and activities for all ages. To attend, bring a new unwrapped backpack filled with school supplies or a gift card valued at \$30 or more. Paid parking is available at Piedmont Park in the SAGE parking deck.

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Idol's Season 10 winner Scotty McCreery headlines The American Idol Live Tour 2011.



TLC's 'Say Yes to the Dress: Bridesmaids,' shot at Bridals By Lori in Atlanta, will return for another season.



Models displayed some heart-friendly designs on the catwalk during the Colombia Moda fashion show.

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