FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ) of Downers Grove, Illinois

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Regional Church Council of the Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin
CCIW Mission First
401 W. Jefferson Street
Bloomington, IL 61701-3826

September 15, 2017

Dear Regional Church Council,

On behalf of the members of First Christian Church of Downers Grove and the families of our community, please accept our sincere thanks and appreciation for your support of our 8th Annual Back to School Fair with your generous grant of $2110.

On Saturday, August 12, our church facility and grounds were transformed into a Back to School Fair. Your donation assisted us in giving away 300 Elementary and 100 Junior/ Senior High backpacks filled with school supplies plus 30 Preschool bags. The Fair is now five times its original size from our first year, and we are so grateful for your support. The need continues to be great, and each year we see the persistent need in our community as families prepare to send their children back to school.

The Back to School Fair also provided a day of fun for over 600 people who attended. With games, prizes, music, food, raffles, a cake walk, a bouncy house, face painting, a fire truck, and retiles (turtles, snakes, iguanas), the children and families enjoyed an afternoon of free fun and excitement. Free haircuts, finger printing by LOVE Christian Clearinghouse, and valuable information from the Midwestern University Schools of Dentistry & Optometry, and Literacy DuPage, helped families address health and grooming issues plus literacy issues for adults as they prepare to send their children back to school. Our joy comes from the beaming smiles and sounds of laughter all around us. The comments and thanks from parents let us know that our efforts were appreciated and well received.

We could not have accomplished this alone. It is only through the generosity and cooperation of businesses like yours that we were able to successfully reach out to the community and impact the lives of so many children.

Thank you, again, for your generous contribution and support of our outreach efforts. We hope that we can continue to count on your partnership in this endeavor in years ahead.

Sincerely,

Rick Hamilton
Senior Minister

Tax receipts are available upon request.

Back To School Fair offers free supplies

By BOB RAKOW
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DOWNERS GROVE – Buying supplies is at the heart of the back-to-school season.

Children and their parents descend on retail stores with supply lists in hand to buy pens, pencils, folders, notebooks and a plethora of other materials required for the start of a new school year.

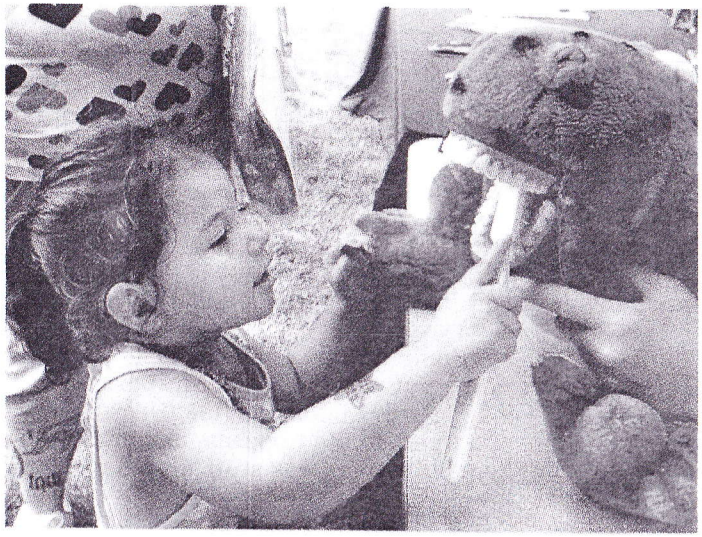
But for many families, footing the bill for school supplies can place a significant strain on the budget.

That's where the First Christian Church of Downers Grove comes in.

The church, 801 63rd St., will host its eighth annual Back to School Fair from noon to 3 p.m. Aug. 12.

More than 400 backpacks full of school supplies were blessed during Sunday services and will be distributed at the fair.

There are 320 backpacks designed for elementary school students and 100 full of supplies needed by high-schoolers, said Carol Clifford, church secretary. The church will distribute smaller bags for preschoolers.



Steve Bittinger - For Shaw Media

Addison Wilson, 2, practices her toothbrushing skills Aug. 13 at the First Christian Church of Downers Grove Back to School Fair.

"They are filled," Clifford said. "I mean they are full of supplies. Whatever you can imagine is in there."

The backpacks include ear buds, and high school students will receive a compass and a flash drive.

The church relied on supply lists provided by local schools when buying materials, Clifford said.

The supplies and monetary donations were mostly provided by members of the church.

"It was the people in the church pulling together," Clifford said. "But we do get [donations] from outside sources."

Walgreens, for example, donates the backpacks given to elementary school students, she said.

The Back to School Fair has grown "by word of mouth over the years," Clifford said. The church promotes the event on social media and distributes fliers throughout the area.

In previous years, a line for school supplies formed before the event started, she said. More than 600 people have attended the fair in previous years.

Distributing backpacks and supplies is only part of the fair.

"The whole grounds of the church is filled with activities," Clifford said.

Free food and beverages are available along with games, music, raffles, face painting and a bouncy house.

"There's free ice cream," Clifford said. "It's free. Everything is free."

A snake and reptile show will be featured at this year's event, and a Downers Grove Fire Department truck is expected to stop by, Clifford said.

Haircuts, demonstrations on appropriate dental care, and fingerprinting also will be available.

"There are times when this is something people need and the fair helps," said Clifford, who added the event is open to everyone.

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