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Third Annual Backpack and School Supply Giveaway: July 29

Sometimes it's the little things—like a school backpack with papers, pencils, erasers and rulers that can set the tone for a successful school year.

But some families can't afford such necessities.

Two years ago, Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke and other volunteers began providing backpacks and school supplies to needy City residents and those from throughout Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The effort has provided a helping hand to nearly 3,000 kindergarten through 12th-grade students and their families. The third annual "Backpack and School Supply Giveaway" takes place Saturday, July 29, between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at Foss Field Park on the Perris City Hall Campus, 138 North Perris Boulevard.

Along with Burke, the group Life Lifters International—which works to empower and improve the lives of children—also is sponsoring the upcoming giveaway. Funding for the backpacks comes from corporate sponsors, businesses, individuals and Burke's personal finances. To contribute to the backpack giveaway, interested residents should contact Tracey Holcomb at 760-819-1006 or at Life Lifters International, PO Box 6166, March Air Reserve Base, CA, 92518.

"It's just a good feeling to know you're helping someone move up and move on in school," Burke said. "It's a small investment with a great big return. It eases the burden off of our parents who want to start the school year right." Burke said the giveaway is not restricted to Perris residents.

In previous giveaways, residents from as far away as Victorville have benefitted. The weather in July can be warm so some water will be provided. At the end of the day, Burke says dispensing backpacks in the heat can leave volunteers feeling

But it's a good kind of tired.

"It's a good feeling to provide children with the school resources so they can move up and move on," Burke said. "It makes me feel really good to be in a position to lend a helping hand."

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