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filling backpacks, feeling strapped

As new **school** year approaches, many programs are here to help

HERALD-LEADER STAFF REPORT

It's that time of year again and between clothes and shoes and the ever-growing list of **supplies**, getting kids back to **school** can be a strain on the family budget. And with times as tough as they are, more people are expected to need help this year. For example, the Ready, Set, Go! Lexington Back-to-**School** Rallies will be supplying some 8,000 students with fully equipped backpacks this year. That's up from 6,000 last year.

Last year, 372,433 Kentucky students - or 54 percent - qualified for free or reduced lunch, according to Lisa Gross of the Kentucky Department of Education. Although there are no firm numbers, she said, that number is likely to rise.

So, to help stretch that family dollar, here are some programs that offer help with everything from **school supplies** to meals to referrals for other services.

Emily Ulber, Rochelle Haliburton and Greg Kocher contributed to this report.

Supply drives and other giveaways

Heritage House Mission

The mission, 155 N. Ashland Ave., is giving away clothes and **school supplies** for all **school**-age children from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Aug. 7. Parents must bring identification. Children must accompany parents.

Commonwealth Credit Union

The credit union is accepting donations for its Stuff the Bus campaign until Saturday. Donations, such as backpacks, notebooks, glue, pencils, crayons, binders and calculators, may be dropped off at 280 Meijer Way in Lexington.

Also, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 8, volunteers from the Fayette County Family Resource and Youth Service Centers will be in front of the Richmond Road Wal-Mart collecting **supplies** for the drive. The donations will be distributed to local students.

Woodford County

Beginning Monday, back-to-**school supplies** will be distributed from the Family Resource Center at Simmons Elementary **School**, 830 Tyrone Pike in Versailles. Hours are 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. weekdays. More info: (859) 873-7663.

Clark County

The 12th annual Readyfest for Clark County Public **Schools** will be 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday at College Park, 15 Wheeler Ave., Winchester. Back-to-**school supplies** to be distributed include pencils, crayons, notebook paper, folders, and a limited number of

backpacks. Students must be on site and accompanied by a parent or guardian. The event is sponsored by Family Resource and Youth Service Centers in the Clark County **schools**.
Check Advance **School Supply** Drive

Each Check Advance location in Kentucky will be giving away three backpacks stuffed with **supplies**. To win a backpack, visit a Check Advance location and fill out a form to enter a drawing. Boxes are also available at each location to accept donations of **supplies**, which will be passed along to local **school** districts. To find a Check Advance location, go to www.lifedoes happen.com

Ready, Set, Go!

Lexington Neighborhood Back-to-**School** rallies at 18 locations will run 8:30 to 10 a.m. Aug. 8. Free **school supply** giveaways will begin at noon. There will be entertainment, games, free food, workshops and resources for parents. The event is sponsored by LexLinc, 436 Georgetown St. For more information or to volunteer at a site, call Dani Yannelli at (859) 381-1302, Ext. 224.

Cardinal Valley Park, 2077 Cambridge Dr.
Carver Neighborhood Center, 522 Patterson St.
Castlewood Park, 201 Castlewood Dr.
Coolivan Park, 550 W. Sixth St.
Douglass Park, 726 Georgetown St.
Duncan Park, 530 N. Limestone
First Baptist Bracktown Church, 3016 Bracktown Rd.
Gainesway, 1165 Center Pkwy.
Greater New Hope Christian Center, 1719 Jennifer Rd.
Green Acres Shelter, 1560 LaSalle Rd.
Imani Missionary Baptist Church, 1555 Georgetown St.
Marlboro Park, 561 Benton Rd.
Pralltown Park/Lou Johnson Park, 190 Lou Johnson Way
The Rock/LaRoca United Methodist Church, 1015 N. Limestone.
Russell Cave Church of Christ, 1841 McCullough Dr.
Spiegel Heights Park, 424 Spiegel St.
Temple of Prayer, 549 Parkside Dr.
Woodhill Park, 457 Larkwood Dr.