

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION

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JULY 2019

Backpacks for 3



Lilian heard about the City Kids Back-to-School Festivals from her pastor. As a single mom, she struggles to provide school supplies for her children.



Lilian and her three kids have been blessed by friends like you. Your generosity has provided backpacks filled with school supplies for Veronica, Gecelle and Jason.

"I'm a single mom. I don't have anybody to help me with my kids," Lilian says. "This is very good for me because I don't have much extra money to spend on backpacks and supplies for three children."

Getting supplies and new backpacks plus clothes and haircuts for three children can add up to several hundred dollars, and that's just not something that Lilian can afford, even working full-time.

"I Can't Give Them Everything"

"Sometimes my children are disappointed because I can't give them everything they want and need. My salary just isn't enough," Lilian says.

Continued inside . . .



Get involved at srmission.org/backpacks

Backpacks offer needy kids hope, self-esteem and the opportunity for a bright future.



Backpacks for 3

(Continued from cover)

Not being able to give their kids everything they need is heartbreaking for any parent. But Lilian has seen the joy on her children's faces when they come to the City Kids event, pick up their backpacks and enjoy the other activities.

"They were so happy for the new school year to start," Lilian says.

More Than a Backpack

A brand-new backpack full of supplies is exciting for a school-age child. But the real blessing to Lilian is the fact that these backpacks will help her children have a bright future.

"Now they have more opportunity," she says. "They have usable supplies. They can learn more when they have all the tools they need. It's wonderful."

Looking to the Future

Lilian has always wanted her kids to go to college, and now that they are getting the most out of their primary education, she believes they will. Your support is a huge part of that!

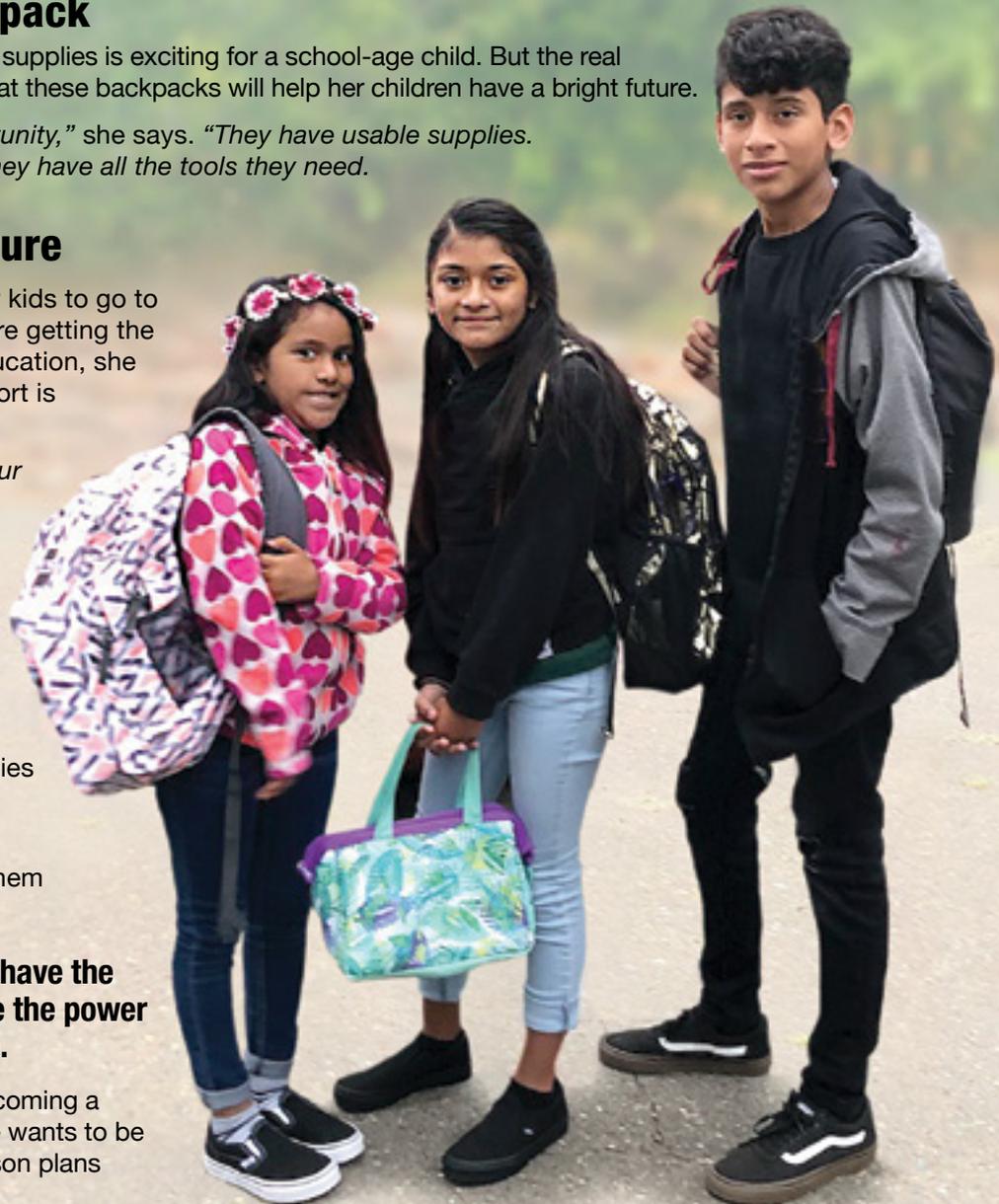
"Thank you very much for your help," Lilian says. "It's very important for my family because I don't have any other resources."

Your gift today will provide Lilian's children (as well as hundreds of others in Sonoma County) with the backpacks and school supplies they simply can't afford on their own.

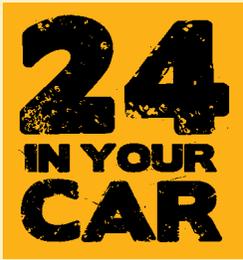
What a blessing you are to them and our entire community!

Because Lilian's children have the tools they need, they have the power to dream about the future.

Veronica is thinking about becoming a teacher or a scientist, Gecelle wants to be an artist or a surgeon and Jason plans to be a musician.



Each \$24.86 you give provides one backpack full of school supplies for one student.



Grant's Experience

For most people, living out of your car for 24 hours doesn't sound like fun – even if it's for

a great cause. But when Grant's son-in-law called him last year and said he'd planned to take his kids to our 24 In Your Car event but wasn't able to, Grant jumped at the chance.



24 In Your Car is a great way to build compassion and teach people of all ages what it really means to be homeless.

Grant arrived with the kids not sure what to expect and left amazed at what he learned.

"They had things to not just keep you busy, but to teach you something, and put you in the shoes of a homeless person."

"You have to go around and find a bathroom, somewhere to plug your cell phone in, figure out where to get a shower or find a meal. I also made up about a dozen homeless kit bags, in a Ziploc bag. I kept those in a bucket in the backseat of my truck and so when I'd see somebody on the corner, I would give them that," Grant says. "I just gave my last one away."

The Biggest Eye Opener

"The biggest eye opener for me at 24 In Your Car was touring the shelter at Redwood Gospel Mission and learning that homelessness isn't so much about not having a shelter or a roof over your head. It's about lack of relationships."

"A lot of people are reluctant to make commitments where they have to show up every week or every month or something, but try 24 In Your Car because it's like a variety pack of what the Redwood Gospel Mission does and you get a little taste of each different part of the ministry. Try it!" – Grant



The Best Investment

Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

People don't become homeless because of an individual circumstance. They become homeless because they don't have strong relationships with friends, family or a church that can support them when they need it most.

Instead, you and I become that support, that family.

We can become the people who support them, pray for them and teach them a new way of life. It's an honor to be a part of it, and it's a great privilege. But that doesn't change the fact that they would be better off if their families were in a healthy place themselves.

That's why I believe supporting families is easily possibly the best investment we could make in the future of our community – and our world.

I realize that's a big statement. But if you think about your own experience (whether it's been good or bad) and think about Lillian and her kids and Grant and his grandchildren, I think you'll see what I mean.

But if not, let's talk about it. Feel free to reach out to me.



City Kids Back-to-School Festivals



**CITY KIDS NORTH COUNTY: August 3rd,
11 AM to 2 PM at Windsor Town Green**

**CITY KIDS SANTA ROSA: August 10th,
10 AM to 3 PM at Julliard Park**

Backpacks are a big highlight for our annual back-to-school festivals, but these events also include a whole lot more!

They are geared toward poor and needy kids ages 5-12 and run in partnership with local churches.

We hold two events to ensure families don't have to travel too far, and at each location we'll have a variety of activities and services. Plus, we have Gospel presentations so that kids have the chance to learn about Jesus.

This year we're expecting 2,000 children plus their families.

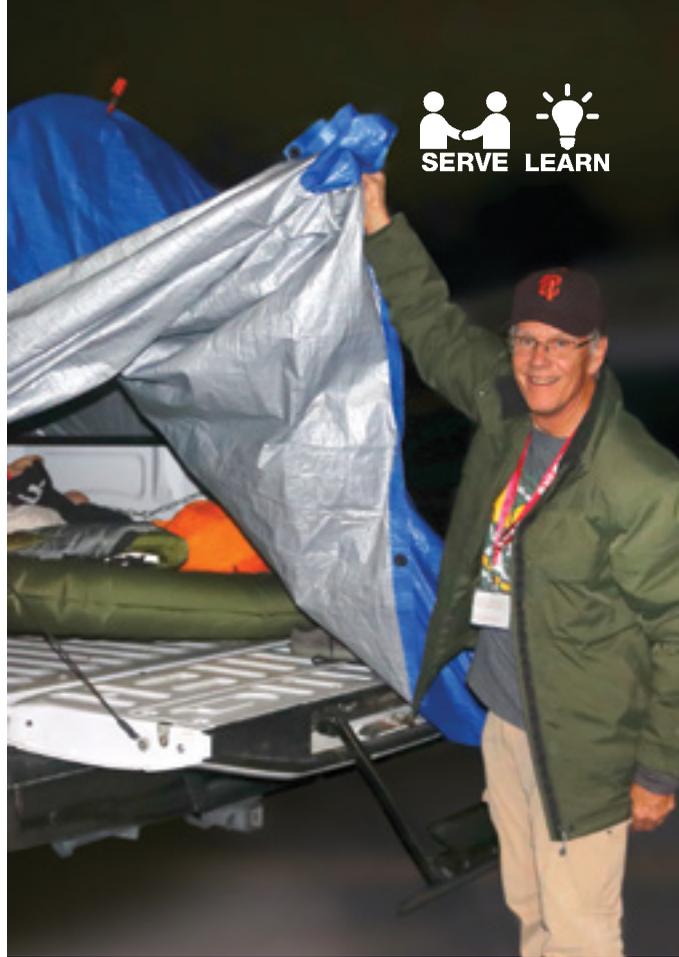
The Festivals Include:

- Food • Games • Haircuts • Book giveaway
- Backpacks with school supplies
- Dental check-ups • Gospel presentation

If you'd like to volunteer at one (or both) of the City Kids Festivals, contact Trina at tbrannen@srmission.org or at 707.578.1830 to sign up!

Backpack Tags

You can share the love of Jesus and encourage children in need by signing and returning both of your Backpack Tags and a gift to provide backpacks by August 1st.



"They had things to not just keep you busy, but to teach you something, and put you in the shoes of a homeless person."

Sign Up for



24 In Your Car started as a fundraiser, but it's become so much more. The annual event has become a way for people like you to learn new ways to minister to your homeless neighbors. By taking a day to walk in the shoes

of someone who is struggling, you'll understand more about the challenges your homeless neighbors face and be better equipped to help.

"After 24 in Your Car, you won't understand everything about homelessness, but you'll understand it a lot better." – Jeff Gilman

This year's 24 In Your Car event will be held September 28-29, and we would love for YOU to join us!

Sign up by calling contacting Mariella at mzapata@srmission.org or at 707.578.1830 or by going online to 24inyourcar.com.



Backpacks: The Gift of a Bright Future

A backpack full of supplies may not sound life-changing. But it is because of what it leads to.

When you give a backpack, you give the gift of opportunity.

You make it possible for a poor child to have the same tools as their peers. You erase the shame they would feel showing up to class empty-handed. And you give their parents the opportunity to use the little money they have to put food on the table and keep the electricity on.

Plus, you give families a chance to have a bright future.

No one chooses to be born into homelessness or poverty. And without the right tools and a good education, it can be almost impossible to break out. But a backpack, school supplies and the support of caring people in the community can give a needy child the confidence they need to pursue their dream career – and help take care of their own family when the time comes.

Each \$24.86 you give is way more than a high-quality backpack full of supplies. It's an opportunity. It's a chance. It's a future.

There's nothing quite like the feeling of knowing you are supporting a child in need and helping to change the future for families in Sonoma County.



Go to srmission.org/backpacks for the fastest way to help.

REAL CHANGE

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