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Big crowd attends 6th Annual Epic End Of Summer Bash



Four year old Kaydence Sisk, 4, a first year student, sifts through a box of gifts looking for something she really wants. Children were allowed to spin a wheel and pick a gift.

Photo by Terry Witt © July 29, 2017

Story and Photos

By Terry Witt, Senior Reporter © July 29, 2017 at 11:17 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- A crowd estimated at 1,000 people gathered behind First United Methodist Church in Chiefland on Saturday (July 29) for the 6th Annual Epic End of Summer Bash, an event the church sponsors with help from donors to provide children with school supplies.

Susan Ray picked up backpacks loaded with supplies for her sons Alexander Ray, 11 and Benjamin Ray, 5. Alexander attends Nature Coast Middle School and Benjamin attends Whispering Winds Charter School. Both are Chiefland area schools.

Susan said the school supplies are helpful.

“Yes. Everything; It’s very tough right now,” she said.

Cameron Hetherington, 11, and his sister Brooklyn Hetherington, 5, both of Trenton attended with their mother Brittany Hetherington.

“It helps a lot,” Brittany said of the school supplies.

An entry line of parents and children stretched all the way from the C. Doyle McCall Pavilion to U.S. Alt 27, as the people waited to be admitted to the Bash. A second line wound all the way through and around the pole-barn like structure that was packed with parents and children waiting to receive other assistance and gifts.

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Dianna Child, who coordinated the event for the church said they started the day with 600 backpacks. Most were gone by mid-morning.

“We actually had people come here from Alachua County,” Child said. “We have families come through with five or six kids. You’d almost have to take out a loan for school supplies for a family of that size.”

Child said the Bash started out with about 200 parents and children participating. She said First United Methodist Church of Chiefland begins organizing the event in February. She has served as the administrative assistant since the first Bash.

The backpacks are ordered early. The church then solicits the backing of donors to pay for the school supplies.



The backpacks were filled with school supplies. Middle and high school children found a tooth brush, a big pack of pens, highlighters, index cards and a combination of shampoo and conditioner in the packs.

Elementary children found color pencils, two notebooks, pencils, glue, a toothbrush and crayons.

Alexander Ray, 11, gives his little brother Benjamin Ray, 5, a hug after they picked up their school backpacks. The two boys attend Chiefland area private schools.

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Emelin Membrin, 10, (left) and Jennifer Alvarado 8, both from Trenton Elementary School show off their new backpacks filled with school supplies.



Ebony Williams and her daughter Kalashia Durden, 8 months, stand with Wanda Willaims Meeks in back and other family members. The others are Jacques Edwards, 7, Zamyra Joiner, 8, Dannaja Joiner, 11, Jamya Joiner 10 and Harmoni Buie, 4.

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Enjoying their day at the Bash are Aniya Burton, 8, Anique Burton, 2, Sadie Buie, Richard Buie and Netalya Buie, 2.

Diana Child
organized the
Epic Summer
Bash with help
from a
committee of
volunteers.



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Cameron and Brooklyn Hetherington pick out their backpacks.



Toward the end of the summer bash, the crowd thinned out, providing a good view of the C. Doyle McCall Pavilions behind First United Methodist Church of Chiefland. The



Church of Chiefland. The pavilion worked out well for the event. It was built primarily by the United Methodist Men, although some independent contractor work was required too.