

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Back to School Bash gives away more than 800 supply-filled backpacks to Bandera County students

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The Bandera Prophet

An estimated 1,000 people attended this year's annual Back to School Bash, which has evolved from a school supply give-away to a community-wide festival. Hosted by the Hill Country Samaritans at the Lakehills Community Center on Aug. 8, visitors were entertained by games, activities, a petting zoo, dunking booth, bounce house, live music and more, including practical things like free haircuts, physicals, sno-cones, hotdogs and cotton candy.

This year, an additional Bash was hosted on Aug. 7 at the Medina Arms of Hope. Volunteers also traveled to Utopia today, armed with supplies. All were welcome and grade-appropriate backpacks filled with paper, pencils, markers and glue sticks were given to public, private and homeschooled students, from pre-k to 12th grade.

Last year, 525 filled backpacks were given away by more than 100 volunteers. This year, organizers gave away a total of about 840 backpacks. Any remaining supplies will be used throughout the year for those in need.

“I would say, that something equally as important to the Hill Country Samaritans (or perhaps more important), is that the community came together in such a way that relationships were enhanced and families had a tangible way of connecting with those that are wanting to support these kids throughout the year,” Coordinator Kelly Beedle said. “Additionally, we try to create an exciting fun celebration for the students as they start the school year. Hearing comments like, ‘My son said, ‘this was the best day of the year for me,’ or ‘my children can't stop talking about how

much fun they had,' means that, through the efforts of nearly 100 volunteers, we accomplished that goal. We thank God for the success of this Bash season!"

Hill Country Samaritans is a 501c3 Christian non-profit, and has been in existence since 2018. The board and all of its members are volunteers, so each donation goes directly to fund the Back to School Bash.

Financial donations may be made through Paypal on the Hill Country Samaritans website (hillcountrysamaritans.org).