



Main Office
999 164th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98008
425-747-4937

Kirkland Center
11829 97th Avenue NE
Kirkland, WA 98034

Family Resource Center Campus
16225 NE 87th Street, Suite A-2
Redmond, WA, 98052

MEDIA RELEASE

For More Information Contact:

Cami Keyes, Marketing & Communications Manager
Direct: 425-586-2322
Email: CamiK@YouthEastsideServices.org

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YES Youth Receive Backpacks and School Supplies Courtesy of Bellevue Firefighters

BELLEVUE, Wash. (Sept. 20, 2011)—Bellevue Firefighters Community Support Foundation donated backpacks filled with school supplies to young teens and siblings of Youth Eastside Services' (YES) Success Mentoring program. The youth were able to pick their backpack at a special Back-to-School event held at YES' Bellevue office on August 24.

The mentors, mentees and family members ate dinner, played games, and snapped photos with complimentary disposable cameras donated by new mentor, Shelly Nguyen, and her employer Bank of America. Youth volunteers from YES' Latino HEAT program helped guide the event, acting as giving back role models for the mentees and their families.

This is the ninth year the firefighters have supported YES youth with school supplies, and it's the largest gift the foundation makes. The foundation spared no expense and invested in high quality backpacks. One mother commented on the durability: "They will take the kids through the WHOLE school year!"

This year, 60 youth and their siblings received supplies. Most are part of the YES Success Mentoring program which matches youth from single parent households with adults who want to make a positive impact in their lives. Other beneficiaries of the backpacks included teens from YES prevention and education programs in schools, and community centers.

"Having new backpacks and supplies before school starts positively impacts the kids' self-esteem and sets the stage for more engagement in school," says Mary Erickson, the success mentor coordinator at YES. She adds that the Success Mentoring Program is always in need of additional volunteers to serve as mentors. Anyone interested in becoming a mentor can learn more by calling YES at 425-747-4937 or visiting youtheastsideservices.org.

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See attached photo. From left to right: Ryan Haley, Christine Anderson, Gracie Parker, Maya Ortega, Jacinta Rupprecht, Shelly Nguyen, Melissa Valencia, Ragde Valencia, Natayah Bauer, Devion Bauer, Pamela Maldonado, Mark Venezia, Miriam Brionez, Nick McLean, Verniah Jefferson, Claudia Browsers, Debra Cox

About Youth Eastside Services

YES is a nonprofit organization and a leading provider of youth counseling and substance abuse treatment in the region. Since 1968, YES has been a lifeline for kids and families, offering treatment and prevention services to help youth become healthy, confident and self-reliant and families to become strong, supportive and loving. While YES accepts insurance, Medicaid, and offers a sliding scale, no one is turned away for inability to pay. For more information, visit www.YouthEastsideServices.org.

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