Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis teams with FedEx and community partners for the Zip Code 38126 Back to School Project: Two schools, 900 backpacks

Volunteers will fill 900 backpacks for distribution to students at Booker T. Washington School (BTW) and LaRose Elementary School during the 3rd Annual Zip Code 38126 Back to School Project. The Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis is seeking more than 100 volunteers to join us in preparing packets and distributing backpacks.

The project will begin Wednesday, October 3, 2018 at Booker T. Washington High School, 715 S. Lauderdale St., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and then move to LaRose Elementary, 864 Willoughby St., 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

This year’s Back to School Project has a strong focus on highlighting health and health services in the community. Studies by Health Department officials found that residents in 38126 had a lower life expectancy rate, averaging 69 years old, compared to those in more affluent areas, averaging 82 years old.

“People do not always realize the far-reaching effects of poverty and how health ties into economic circumstance. We want women and families of 38126 to lead long, healthy lives physically, mentally and financially. Our grantee and community partners offer services that some residents may not have realized are available to them and we are excited to highlight those amenities this year,” Ruby Bright, Executive Director/Chief Administrative Officer of WFGM, said.

Each backpack will include school supplies and a resource packet for parents and guardians to connect them to health and wellness amenities, financial literacy programs, and many other services provided by WFGM grantee and community partners.

“We are proud to partner with the Women’s Foundation and FedEx to support our students and stakeholders in 38126. We are seeing significant improvement in many schools in South Memphis and we are especially proud of the work happening at BTW and LaRose. We could not make these improvements without strong partnerships like the ones we have with the Women’s Foundation and FedEx. We are thankful for their support,” Dorsey Hopson, Superintendent of Shelby County Schools said.

This is a unique opportunity for Memphis to engage with the 38126 Community. Since the Zip Code 38126 Back to School Project’s start two years ago, a total of 100,650 supplies and materials, 1,950 backpacks, and 400 electronic tablets have been distributed to students and parents in the neighborhood. More than 200 Memphians have also given 739 volunteer hours.

The Zip Code 38126 Back to School Project is an example of our two-generation approach, which focuses on creating opportunities for and addressing needs of both children and adults in the same household as a gateway out of poverty. We believe in the potential for early childhood programs and partnerships to support children and parents together.
The project also aligns with the five goals of the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan to reduce poverty by five percent in zip code 38126, the poorest area in the city of Memphis. WFGM is in the third year of Vision 2020, and has invested $3.5 million of a nearly $10 million commitment to 38126 in case management, employment training, early childhood education, youth development, and financial literacy.

The WFGM Zip Code 38126 Back to School Project presenting sponsor is FedEx. Supporting sponsors are Memphis Housing Authority, Memphis Health Center, Shelby County Schools and Urban Strategies, Inc.

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For 23 years, The Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis (WFGM) has played a major role as a backbone organization aligning people, resources, and coordinating community-based services through the two-generation approach. WFGM is an organization of women helping women break the cycle of poverty through philanthropy, leadership and collaboration.