

Press Release



SOLANA BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jodee Brentlinger, Superintendent
(858) 794-7104

Teenage Founder of 'Backpack Giveback' Enlists the Solana Beach School District

Kalia Roper's community service project benefits children and families throughout the region

SOLANA BEACH — A local teenager whose community service project provides backpacks to several nonprofit groups that work with children and families is halfway to her goal of collecting 400 gently used backpacks after enlisting the Solana Beach School District (SBSD) as a partner in the program.

Kalia Roper, who just graduated from St. James Academy, has organized the Backpack Giveback the past two years. To solicit donations for the effort, she designed collection boxes and promotional flyers that she placed in all seven SBSD schools, and teamed up with the Solana Beach Library, Staples, Geppetto's, and the Lomas Santa Fe Country Club to serve as collection points, as well.



SBSD students donated about 200 of their backpacks during the final week of school. The drive continues through August 14 at the other community sites, where Kalia says any used backpack with a working zipper can be dropped off.

"We are so pleased to be able to support Kalia's mission and offer our students an opportunity to contribute to such a worthwhile project that benefits children in our community, and beyond," Superintendent Jodee Brentlinger said. "Kalia is an inspiring young leader, and we look forward to partnering with her in the future."

Last year, Kalia worked with the San Dieguito Union High School District on the drive and

received more than 300 donated backpacks.

“At first, I thought it was going to be pretty small,” Kalia said about the initial drive. “I thought I was going to give the backpacks to families we know that are in need.”

Kalia started thinking about the project last year when she was on crutches for a knee injury and became dependent on her backpack to keep all the things she needed with her —but her hands free. She also became aware that not every family can afford a backpack.

“I saw that we have so many backpacks, and some people don’t have any,” Kalia said. “I thought if you could donate one, you’d really make someone’s day.”

The 14-year-old works with several charitable groups that need backpacks for the work they do: Solana Beach Backpacks for Kids, a local nonprofit that provides public school children experiencing food insecurity with backpacks filled with non-perishable food; a Ukrainian refugee outreach effort that provides resources to those who have been displaced by the war in Ukraine; the Therapeutic Childcare Center at Father Joe’s Villages, which aims to address the unique academic, psychological, and social challenges faced by children who are homeless; the Emilio Nares Foundation, which assists low-income and underserved families caring for a child with cancer or another life-threatening disease; and Birthline of San Diego, which provides support and resources to pregnant women and families with young children.

Kalia, who will attend The Bishop’s School this fall, also raises money to purchase new backpacks for her partner organizations through GoFundMe campaigns, and through proceeds from sales of a book she wrote in collaboration with graphic designer Sandro Alberti, called [“Decorate Your Very Own Backpack: Tips and Tricks,”](#) which is available on Amazon.

To participate in the program, visit www.backpackgiveback.com for more information.

ABOUT THE SOLANA BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Solana Beach School District, nestled on the north coast of San Diego County, serves approximately 2,800 students. Instruction is rich, varied and innovative. Our emphasis is on core standards instruction provided through a continuous progressive curriculum. District schools consistently rank at or near the top in district, county and state accountability measures. Our students and schools have received numerous awards and have been recognized at county, state and national levels for a variety of accomplishments.

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