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## 'Backpack' returns to Piedmont Park

BY MATT SCHAFER  
FRIDAY, 23 JULY 2010 00:00

After two years in drought-caused exile, Backpack in the Park returns to its original home in Piedmont Park today

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Backpack in the Park is one of two annual signature events hosted by For the Kid in All of Us, a nonprofit founded in 2003 to bring [gay men](#), lesbians and gay rights allies together to help underprivileged children.

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[Backpack](#) in the Park provides thousands of students with backpacks and school supplies. After collecting 1,600 supply-filled backpacks last year in Grant Park, For the Kid President Jorge Esteban wants to beat that record this year.

"Last year 1,600 was quiet a stretch, so if we get 1,601 this year we would be thrilled," Esteban says.

The vent will be held in Piedmont Park at Greystone and the nearby pavilion.

"We're going to try and make it a little more interactive for the participants. We'll have music, a rock climbing wall, we'll have the high strikers... we'll also have the infamous wack-a-mole," Esteban says. "We want to have something fun for all ages.

Organizers ask participants to bring a new, unwrapped backpack filled with school supplies like rulers, crayons and spiral notebooks (see the complete supply list at [www.forthekid.org](http://www.forthekid.org)), or bring a gift card valued at \$30. Esteban asks that donors not give sharp objects, and unlike previous years, avoid three-ring binders.

"We always want to make sure that the things we have on the list are relevant to the students, so there are a [couple](#) of changes," Esteban says.

### MORE INFORMATION:

Backpack In The Park  
Aug. 1, 4 - 8 p.m.  
Piedmont Park  
[www.forthekid.org](http://www.forthekid.org)

They've also stopped collecting pens and highlighters and added requests for packages of 3" by 5" index cards. Donors are welcome to include other items in the backpack.

"A few days after the event we'll have a sorting party, and anything that's not on the list we'll take out and we'll donate it to the teachers," Esteban says. "Teachers are always needing supplies."

### Back to school

While For the Kid doesn't have any specific requests, Esteban said pink backpacks were always welcome.

"When you have one beneficiary, Cool Girls, that deals exclusively with girls, it's always difficult to find enough pink backpacks," he said.

The nine beneficiaries also include Agape, AID Atlanta, The Alcove, CHRIS Kids, Camp Horizon, Lake Forest Elementary School, Nicholas House, and for the first time, Lutheran Services of Georgia.

"We have a wonderful range of programs where we serve children who have needs for these backpacks, and we work with people of all religions, so it's not just Lutherans," volunteer coordinator Bob Gibeling says.

"Especially in the refugee areas these are people who just arrived in the United States and a lot of time all they have is the [clothes](#) on their backs, and maybe a suitcase if they're lucky," he says. "Often times they are from a refugee camp and they are starting over here and they just need everything."

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For the Kid's school of choice this year is Lake Forest Elementary School. Lake Forest is a Title One school, which means it gets additional federal funds because of the high number of low-income students.

"We'd really [love](#) to sponsor the whole incoming kindergarten and first grade class this year," Esteban says.

For the Kid will accept donations at the event and at 21 drop off locations, a list of which can be found at the organization's website. Also new this year, For the Kid has teamed with Charitee Heart ([chariteeheart.com](http://chariteeheart.com)) to offer backpacks filled with school supplies, with 10 percent of the purchase price donated back to For the Kid.

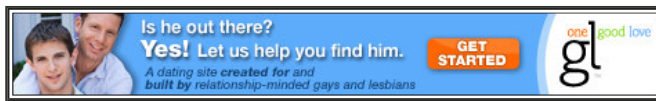
In December, For the Kid in All of Us also hosts the popular Toy Party, which last year collected more than 5,000 toys and gift cards for children in need.

Since its founding in 2003, Toy Party has distributed more than 27,000 toys and gift cards, while Backpack in the Park, which launched in 2006, has donated more than 3,700 backpacks filled with school supplies.

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93° F 75° F



94° F 75° F



92° F 74° F

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