



For Immediate Release
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Washington County-Area Non-Profits Partnering for August 24 Backpack and School Supplies Giveaway at Jonnycake Center of Westerly
Drive-Through Model Offers Safe Method for Children in Need to Receive School Supplies

Westerly, RI – Washington County-area non-profit organizations, including the **Jonnycake Center of Westerly**, **Opening Doors for Westerly’s Children**, and **Wood River Health Services**, and the statewide organization **Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island** have announced that they are partnering for a **back-to-school Backpack and School Supplies Giveaway benefitting local children in need**. This first annual Backpack Giveaway will take place **Monday, August 24** from **11am to 2pm** in the **Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s front parking lot** at 23 Industrial Drive in Westerly. The event is sponsored in part by **The Washington Trust Company**.

Every year, thousands of Rhode Island children are supplied with backpacks, school supplies, and educational materials thanks to backpack giveaway events organized by Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island and numerous local partners. These events have become an annual tradition in the eleven Rhode Island communities that host them, with the events providing free family-friendly entertainment, important health and safety information for students, and food, in addition to the backpacks and supplies that are given away.

This year’s giveaway event in Westerly will take the form of a “drive-through.” Families with underserved children are invited to drive to the Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s front parking lot (across Industrial Drive from the Center) on August 24 between 11am and 2pm to receive a **free backpack that comes filled with essentials needed for a traditional or virtual classroom**. Families will stay inside their vehicles while event staff delivers the backpacks directly into their cars. Drivers and passengers are required to **wear a face mask** during the very brief hand-off. Once delivery is complete, each car may drive away. The 500 backpacks will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

“With many families struggling more than ever because of the pandemic, it is important that we come together to support their children any way we can,” said **Lee Eastbourne**, Jonnycake Center of Westerly Executive Director. “This year’s Backpack and School Supplies Giveaway is a great opportunity for any family in need to save on the cost of purchasing backpacks, writing utensils, and other back-to-school basics. The partners involved are excited to offer this giveaway to the community, and we are deeply grateful to The Washington Trust Company for helping make this year’s event possible.”

“Wood River Health Services (WRHS) is thrilled to be partnering with the Jonnycake Center of Westerly to bring the Back to School Celebration to Washington County”, said **Alison Croke**, President and CEO of WRHS. “As a health center serving the local area, we welcome collaborations with organizations like Jonnycake and Back to School to help promote health and well-being for the children in our community.”

"We are excited to collaborate with these amazing partner organizations and to serve the children and their families in the community", said **Jodie Kløver Koretski**, Executive Director of Opening Doors for Westerly’s Children. “This year has been tough on everyone, and providing support, whether it be a book, backpack, or school supplies, is important – every little bit helps. Thank you to all in the community who donate towards our efforts, and thank you again to The Washington Trust Company for their generosity.”

Families without access to a vehicle can contact the Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s Social Services office to receive assistance. Please call (401) 377-8069 and select Option 1, or email Sarah Cote, Social Services Program Director, at scote@jonnycake.org.

More information about participating organizations and sponsors can be found on page two of this document.

A Non-Profit Charitable Organization

23 Industrial Drive P.O. Box 273 Westerly, RI 02891 401.377.8069 www.jonnycake.org mail@jonnycake.org



Participants and sponsors of the August 24, 2020 Backpack and Supplies Giveaway in Westerly include:

- Jonnycake Center of Westerly: Jonnycake.org
- Opening Doors for Westerly's Children: OpeningDoorsWesterly.org
- Wood River Health Services: WoodRiverHealthServices.org
- The Washington Trust Company: WashTrust.com
- Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island: BTSCRI.org
- AARP of Rhode Island: AARP.org
- Bank Newport: BankNewport.com
- Bank Rhode Island: BankRI.com
- Centreville Bank: CentrevilleBank.com
- City of Central Falls: CentralFallsRI.us
- City of Providence: ProvidenceRI.gov
- CollegeBound Saver: CollegeBoundSaver.com
- Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island: NHPRI.org
- Pawtucket Credit Union: PCU.org
- Providence Community Health Centers: ProvidenceCHC.org
- Rhode Island Department of Health: Health.RI.gov
- Sodexo Education: Sodexo.com
- United Way of Rhode Island: UWRI.org

About The Jonnycake Center of Westerly

The Jonnycake Center of Westerly's mission is to provide a continuum of services in cooperation with other agencies in our service area to assist people through crisis situations and work with each individual to find a path out of dependency toward self-sufficiency. For more information, visit jonnycake.org, become a fan on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/jonnycakecenter), follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/jonnycakecenter) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/jonnycakecenter), or call (401) 377-8069.

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