

**PRESS RELEASE
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LOCAL KIDS GET BACK TO SCHOOL WITH DONATED BACKPACKS

In support of its area youth mentoring participants, The Junior Senior Friends Program will distribute 60 backpacks to youth in the Greater Concord area program. This project was made possible by a grant from the Junior Service League of Concord. In addition, the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Clinic of Concord employees collected school supplies to place in each bag.

The "Back to School Bags" distribution invitations have been sent to Junior Friends who have been invited to pick up their backpack on Wednesday, August 19th 4:00 pm-6:00 pm at Arnie's Place, an ice cream stand and restaurant on Loudon Road in Concord, NH. Tom Arnold, owner of Arnie's Place, has generously offered to be the host location for this event and will be donating free ice cream cones to the Junior Friend backpack recipients.

A key component of the Junior Senior Friends Program is creating a strong collaboration between the Senior Friend (mentor), parents/guardians, child, program coordinator, and school staff. Research shows that volunteer mentors can play a powerful role in greatly enhancing a young person's prospects for leading a healthy and productive life. Children with mentors often have improved school attendance and attitude toward school, improved relationships with family, teachers, and peers, and make better choices (less likely to use alcohol, drugs, and violence). Everyone benefits when our young people are prepared for the future and the Back to School Bags project is helping the youth in our program be better prepared for theirs.

For more information on The Junior Senior Friends mentoring program or to volunteer, please contact Brooke Noonan at The Friends Program at 228-1193.