



## **Build with Purpose Distributes 4,000 Backpacks to New Jersey Public School Students**

*Working to build better schools in New Jersey, Build with Purpose is coordinating the distribution of 4,000 backpacks to school children across the state*

HARRISON (September 16, 2011)- Students at Lady Liberty Charter School are getting a little help this morning with some extra school supplies. Volunteers from Build with Purpose, a NJ-based community development organization, arrived with backpacks filled with notebooks, folders, and pencils for the school's 460 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Located at 15 Frank E Rodgers Blvd in Harrison, NJ, the school is one of the many charter schools in New Jersey that Build with Purpose is assisting.

Build with Purpose plans to distribute over 4,000 backpacks to schools across the state including: Community Charter School of Paterson in Paterson, Foundation Academy in Trenton, University Heights Charter School and Marion P. Thomas Charter School in Newark, Queen City Academy in Plainfield, PleasanTech Academy Charter School in Pleasantville, and Hope Academy Charter School in Asbury Park. Most of these schools are part of efforts to create high-quality charter schools in neighborhoods that have been plagued by failing public schools.

Requiring coordination across several weeks and involving numerous volunteers, this effort is just one of the ways that Build with Purpose sees an opportunity to help build vibrant and healthy communities. Founded in 2003, Build with Purpose has historically focused on the bricks and mortar of charter school development and the organization is now completing its eighteenth charter school project and has developed over \$100,000,000 of facilities over those nine years.

However, increasingly, Build with Purpose has been helping schools and communities to build gardens, foster community health connections and to tap into other programs and resources. In this case, Build with Purpose is working with Better Education for Kids, Inc. (B4K) to provide backpacks filled with essential school supplies to students in need.

“We are proud of the work that we do to build high-quality buildings for local charter schools, but we also know that we need to and can do more. By helping to provide school supplies to students in need and tap into additional resources, we are helping these schools, these families and these communities to save real money and to do better academically,” said Brian Keenan, Director & President of Build with Purpose.

The backpack program is just one of a number of new efforts by Build with Purpose to become a key partner with schools in broader neighborhood and community efforts. This backpack effort was spearheaded by Rose Grummer-Strawn, a volunteer with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Ms. Grummer plans to work with the organization over the next year to help foster these kinds of community connections and to bring additional resources into schools and nonprofits in underserved communities.

And for its part, Better Education for Kids was excited to have a statewide partner with the resources, expertise and community connections to distribute so many backpacks. “We are very excited to team up with Build with Purpose for such an important project. In these difficult economic times, basic school supplies are often unaffordable for many families. We want parents and kids to focus on a successful school year, and these backpacks and supplies mean there will be one less thing for families to worry about,” said Shelley Skinner, Deputy Director of Better Education for Kids (B4K).

Build with Purpose is a statewide community development organization that works to build sustainable organizations and healthy, vibrant communities. The organization provides all phases of real estate development and technical assistance including financial structuring and project management to get nonprofit facilities ranging from charter schools to housing developments built. Build with Purpose has been recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education with the Corporate Partnership Award for its work with charter schools and by the Federal Department of Education as a promising practice in real estate development.

For more information, contact Build with Purpose at 732-635-1000.

On the web:

[www.bwpurpose.org](http://www.bwpurpose.org)

[www.b4njkids.org](http://www.b4njkids.org)