

# BACK TO SCHOOL BASH A SMASH

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YOURNEWS CONTRIBUTOR

More than 900 students lined up with their parents at the recent Back to School Bash at the Gifford Youth Achievement Center.

Organizations like Gifford Youth Achievement Center make sure children went back to school fully stocked by supplying backpacks loaded with supplies at its annual Back to School Bash.

Freddie Woolfork, GYAC's director of public relations and facilities operations, has put the event together the past 19 years with the help of volunteers and donors who make it a celebration rather than a chore.

Indian River County Commissioner Joe Flescher began by telling the students about the importance of education and to acknowledge those who had donated time and supplies for the students to "have the right tools to keep everyone on the same page."

School District Superintendent Mark Rendell, Assistant Supervisor of Operations John Teske, County Administrator Jason Brown, Science Institute of Discovery founder Margaret Ingram and Maj. Eric Flowers of the Indian River County Sheriff's Office all showed up to support the students.

The earliest to arrive were able to find that special backpack with Spiderman, Dora the Explorer or other school-aged heroes, but no matter which one they received, 910 students left GYAC with the right tools to begin their school year.

Families also listened to the Gifford Youth Orchestra and stopped at an area where Tina Zayas of the Florida Department of Health and IRCISO Deputy Roberta Barker were fitting children for



Sunrise Rotary Vero Beach's Linda Scott stands among just one grade's bookbags.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA TASCON



Some young students were just a little bigger than their backpacks.



Angelia Perry, Aundrea Perry, Annette Reason and Denise Smith

free bike helmets.

"It was a great community event as always," said Zayas, who gave out safety information and helmets to at least 100 students.

Gifford Youth Achievement Center is located at 4875 43rd Ave. To see a list of donors and to learn more about the center's After-School Education and programs for those of all ages, visit [www.GYAC.net](http://www.GYAC.net).



County Commissioner Joe Flescher asks the children waiting in line if they were excited to return to school.

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