

## **GARDEN SPOT VILLAGE SUPPORTS ELANCO STUDENTS IN NEED**

*Community coordinates donation of more than 50 backpacks filled with school supplies*

**NEW HOLLAND, Pa. — Aug. 19, 2011** — Dozens of local students who might otherwise have done without will be sporting new backpacks full of school supplies, thanks to a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Garden Spot Village Making-A-Difference committee. Next week, the ELANCO School District will receive more than 50 backpacks for distribution to students in need at New Holland, Blue Ball and Brecknock elementary schools and Garden Spot Middle School.

“In past years, we had worked with Bangor Episcopal Church and other local churches to support the Back to School Carnival organized by St. Stephen United Church of Christ and help make it a success,” said Colleen Musselman, director of life enrichment at Garden Spot Village and a member of the community’s Making-A-Difference Planning Committee. “When that initiative ended last year, our Making-A-Difference committee embraced the backpack project as another way to reach out into the community and help others.”

“It’s a huge help to families,” said Kathy Kuhn, home and school visitor for district.

“Being poor is painful for kids. They don’t have what other kids have, and they notice it,” she said, noting that many families in the district meet poverty guidelines. Having backpacks like the other students can help ease those feelings of difference.

Garden Spot Village residents purchased backpacks of varying styles and colors.

“A lot of our residents expressed how fun it was to go shopping for school supplies—something they had not done for quite a few years,” Musselman said.

Members of St. Stephens UCC donated school items remaining from past years. Staff and residents at Garden Spot Village and members of Bangor Episcopal Church filled the backpacks with pencils, paper, notebooks, tissues and other useful items. Volunteers will deliver the backpacks to the district before the first day of school.

The Making-A-Difference committee regularly explores opportunities for senior adults to go out into the community, help others and make a difference. The group has donated warm winter clothing to students in the ELANCO School District, helped clean shelves at the New Holland Food Bank, collected baby clothing and supplies for the Susquehanna Pregnancy Center, collected tools for Mennonite Disaster Service work teams that were headed to areas ravaged by Hurricane Katrina, shipped care packages to servicemen and women overseas, collected coats and warm clothing for the Water Street Distribution Center and served meals at the mission.

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