

Germantown Boys & Girls Club event gets students ready to go back to school

By Arlene Edmonds For Digital First Media Sep 4, 2018 Updated 8 hrs ago [Comments](#)



Volunteers Jodi and Jim Paulus hand out backpacks with school supplies at the Germ
Submitted photo



GERMANTOWN — Dozens of children went back to school with a new bookbag filled with supplies thanks to an initiative at the Germantown Boys & Girls Club.

The special festival-style event featured face painting and a giant inflated slide, in addition to supply giveaways. One could even find paralegal Robin Rosenthal giving out temporary tattoos. This event was all made possible by the sponsorship of Messa & Associates.

Ironically, two of those who were most excited about the event were not youngsters. Nor were they among the elated parents who said that the school gear was a godsend. They were two long-term Germantown residents who remembered when these types of events were not around.

"I grew up at 220 W. Penn St.," said Malady Simpson, who had contributed handmade tote bags and other accessories. "I now live in Delaware, but I come back to this area often. I come for many activities at the center, but this is my first time at this event. I think it's great. That's why I decided to donate the bags, quilts and other items that I sewed for them."

Catherine Ledwell is a lifelong Germantown resident. She said she remembers when the Boys & Girls Clubs in Germantown were segregated. She said since she is African American, she grew up going to the nearby Wissahickon Boys & Girls Club, located at Morris and Coulter. She said it was good seeing diverse faces at the Germantown Boys & Girls Club because when she was growing up, one would never see a person of color in the rear yard.

"It is so important that different organizations and businesses come together to help our children," said Ledwell, who has served on the Wissahickon club's council for more than 25 years. "We want to keep these clubs going because it is about the children. We are always thankful when different organizations sponsor [initiatives] for the children," she said.

Yet the focus of the event was clearly on the youngsters. Just ask volunteer Jodi Paulus. Though this was her first year sorting supplies and packing bookbags, she said she found it rewarding.

"This just helps the kids. I love seeing them enjoy the slide and other activities. It's just a great way to get them ready for school," Paulus said.

ADVERTISEMENT

SCROLL TO CONTINUE WITH CONTENT

Roseann Gomez concurred.

"This is all about giving back the community," she said. "It's just gives you a good feeling when you see the kids this happy as they are going back to school. When I see how grateful and respectful they are, it makes my day. I think this is wonderful, and I hope to keep volunteering for this every year."

The Germantown Boys & Girls Club advisory members and other staff were also present during the Back to School Drive. Some children from the Nicetown and Wissahickon clubs were bused over.

"I know you see the [fun activities] and the excited children, but I think this is important because it helps the parents out," said Christie Holland, the assistant director for the Germantown Boys & Girls Club. "Many just cannot afford to give their children all the things that they need to have to bring to school. So when you have something like this, it helps the family out."

The Germantown Boys & Girls Club houses afterschool art programs, a literacy program, a computer lab and many activities to expose the Germantown youngsters to STEM, according to Holland. During the past summer, about 100 children came through there for programs, and even more attend programs through the center during the school year, she said.