



Ares Meyer, 5, receives a backpack during the Back to School Resource Fair at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Fairfield, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

Resource Fair grows in numbers, services with each new year

By **Todd R. Hansen**

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FAIRFIELD — Shawn Venable went out school shopping and was taken aback by the prices on backpacks.

“The backpacks they (her two children) wanted were \$20,” said Venable, who attended the annual Back to School Resource Fair on Saturday at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church on Union Avenue in Fairfield.

The fair was prepared to hand out 1,833 backpacks, each stuffed with school supplies.

“Being a single mother, it helps,” Venable said.



Ares Meyer, 5, receives a backpack during the Back to School Resource Fair at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Fairfield, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)



Faby Maravilla retrieves backpacks to give to children during the Back to School Resource Fair at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Fairfield, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

Jimena Vega, 13, is fitted for a new bike helmet during the Back to School Resource Fair at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Fairfield, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)



Maria Barragan is given a bag of fruit from volunteers for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano during the Back to School Resource Fair at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Fairfield, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

Michelle Urbina has three children in school, ranging from preschool and kindergarten to middle school.

“It’s hard for me; it’s hard for everyone. This is very helpful,” said Urbina, who was pleasantly surprised that the resource fair also was offering bike helmets for the youngsters. “I didn’t know about that.”

The Fairfield Department of Parks and Recreation was also handing out information about its after-school and other youth programs.

“We have after-school programs that fill the gaps from when school gets out and (parents) get home,” said Jeremy Profitt, a community outreach and engagement manager for the city department.

Ann Maria Parra, a community outreach liaison for the Family Resource Center at the Fairfield-Suisun School District, has been to all the resource fairs.

The first involved the church, the resource center and one elementary school. She is amazed how much it has grown.

“I think every year it has gone up and up,” Parra said.

Liz Teressi, the interim director of Student Services for the school district, said the resource fair tries to grow with the kinds of services that are needed each year, and those services often reach outside the classroom.

New to the fair this year was an organization that was providing tips to students about how best to complete their homework assignments.

The fair also included live bands, and a variety of food choices – including some to take home.

Teressi said that the Fairfield police officers and firefighter associations use their own union funds to support the fair.