

## **August 4, 2018 FREE SCHOOL PHYSICALS - ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY**



The Physicals were conducted in the South County Health Department Offices in the County Government Center, a large and confusing building. The children and their families got so much more than just the school physical thanks to so many different people and organization volunteers.

Each of the approximately 60 children received the physical examination they needed to enter school, a backpack stuffed with school supplies, a book to take home and much more. Lots of brothers and sisters who were there but who didn't need a physical didn't go home empty handed. They also were able to pick out a book to take home. Our numbers were lower than last year – perhaps one of them might be that fewer families with uninsured elementary school children moved into our county last year.

The examined children received vision screening and, if needed, were referred to places where to go for a prescription and glasses at low or no cost. They also received a dental screening and a bag with a toothbrush and instructions on how to brush and floss.

The eligible families had the opportunity to be enrolled in a “medical home” and get continuing medical care and other county family services and more.

This program requires a lot of volunteers including doctors and nurses and other medical people and lots of others on the day of the exams. Our volunteers signed up on 7 different sign-up sheets and information was available to provide the needed help- ranging from what list of the school supplies were needed, packing up the donated supplies and backpacks to take to the physicals and taking them to the physicals location, packing up the extra supplies, taking them to the physicals and returning those that had been packed extra so the children could choose one, and then taking the many boxes of supplies to ECHO. Lynbrook, Garfield and Crestwood elementary schools, the Crestwood Center and the Springfield Family Resource Center. All places that need and appreciate getting them. That's another way of providing support.

It took lots of donations of backpacks and school supplies. Donations of supplies and funds to purchase them came from us and the following churches- St. Bernadette Catholic Church, First Baptist, Messiah United Methodist, St. Mark's Lutheran, and Prince of Peace Lutheran. A wonderful example of ecumenical support. The books were donated through the generosity of the INOVA Medical Librarians.

On Saturday our volunteers and those from the Medical Reserve Corps, the Buffalo soldiers, Lions club and dentist mostly directed the flow of people through the many step process, helped translating for those for whom English is a second language, gave out backpacks and returned the unused backpacks to St. C's and more.

I think the children and their families could sense something very important. We were all there because we cared- cared about the children and their families. We all treated them with dignity and warmth.

The physicals are an outreach ministry - a wonderful example of a large caring community working together reaching out and positively affecting so many using many different people with different skills and all involved with the goal to make the lives of children and their families better. This is a reflection of the love that we receive from Christ and one way to we can spread His love to others in need as He has called us to do for our neighbors.

Your sister in Christ, Lynn Knox