

"Back To School/Stay In School gives Alton students edge, donations needed

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
July 14 2016 11:53 AM



ALTON - The annual "**Back To School/Stay In School**" is an event that enables Alton School District students to start the year with a full set of school supplies and ready to excel.

The Alton Branch of the NAACP will host the 21st Annual "Back To School/Stay In School" event at **10 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 13**. The NAACP joins many other community organizations and the Alton School District in organizing the effort.

The event provides free backpacks and school supplies to nearly 1,000 youth in K-12 grade levels. The event also features a variety of booths and a keynote address to the youth reminding them of the importance regarding academics and staying in school. This year's keynote address will be provided by **Joel Sheridan, Vice President and General Manager of Argosy Casino.**

The gathering will be hosted on the grounds of **James Killion Park at Salu** on Washington Avenue in Alton, Illinois.

Alton branch of the NAACP President **James Gray** started the event and wants to make sure it continues to go strong into the future.

"The event costs over \$24,000, so there is no way we could do it without people donating money," he said. "This is the most costly event the NAACP has each year. We have been able to get enough supporters over the years so it can happen."

Gray said the event does give Alton school children "an edge" to start the academic year.

"They have the necessary supplies and equipment they need in front of them," he said.

In addition to the supplies and program, students will also receive a picnic luncheon. Free bus transportation is also provided to the event. Students must be present to receive school supplies.

Vendors may set up tables at the event for no costs by contacting **James Gray or Kristie Baumgartner.**

Donations are still needed to help support the event since it is anticipated that need will be extremely high this year due to the economy. Donations can be mailed to the NAACP office at **P.O. Box 1216 - Alton, IL 62002** or picked up by calling James Gray at **(618) 304-7655.**