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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2017

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Free Haircuts Help Harford County Kids Go Back to School in Style

BEL AIR, Md., (Sept. 13, 2017) - The new school year started in style for more than 130 Harford County children with limited resources, thanks to free haircuts and new school supplies donated by local businesses in partnership with Harford County government. Children received the haircuts from participating stylists at an event on August 28, organized by the Harford County Department of Community Services and hosted by The EPICENTER in Edgewood. The free services were provided to families from Harford Family House, Anna's House, SARC, Havre de Grace Housing Authority, Village at Lakeview, and The EPICENTER in Edgewood, along with walk-ins. This is the second year that Community Services has coordinated the popular event, which also brought together local community organizations offering resources to families in attendance.

Donating their time and talents were: Becca Conte, Sarah Flaherty, Trish Rossi, Debbie Morton, and Erin Thompson with NVS Merle Norman Salon and Spa; Leila Woods with Lluminaire Salon; Denise Jones and Rashida Smith with Ambiance Beauty Salon; David Barmer, Charles Faison, and Mark Shields with Anthony's Barbershop; Susan Baron, Sun Harper, and Kilnan Urban with Edgewood Barber Shop; Alonzo Reed with Fade Masters Barber Shop; Charee Johnson and Cheryl Williams with For the Total You Salon; Hope Norton with Serenity Hair & Beauty; Erika Brandt with Sports Clips; and Renee Minter, and Nate and Mijiza Green.

“I’m so appreciative Community Services reached out to us,” said Tammy Ehrbaker, co-owner of NVS Merle Norman Salon and Spa, which has supported the event every year. “It was a wonderful experience. The stylists enjoy being there. They shared some really touching stories of the families they met.”

Rashida Smith, a stylist from Ambiance Beauty Salon in Abingdon, was a volunteer.

“I am grateful to be able to help,” she said. “The kids are really appreciative. It was great to see their smiles and confidence when they left.”

Several community organizations were on hand to meet with families during the eight-hour event, including: the Harford County Health Department, Healthy Harford, Harford County Sheriff’s Office, Harford County Public Library, Empowering Minds, Harford County Community Action Agency, Harford County Housing and Community Development, Harford County Parks and Recreation, Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy, Harford County Mediation Services, WIC, Harford County Education Foundation, We Canerve Movement, Peaceful Waters Services and Harford County Public Schools’ Food and Nutrition Services, Department of Special Education, Pupil Personnel Workers, and the Judy Center.

Community partners helped families obtain copies of birth certificates, register for free and reduced price meal benefits, enroll in medical assistance programs and acquire student IDs. Attendees were also able to access information and referrals for mental health services, utility assistance, housing services and many other resources. In addition, the Harford County Health Department provided free dental screenings for children.

Youngsters enjoyed healthy lunches and snacks provided by Harford County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services, and activities and games provided by The EPICENTER.

Mountain Christian Church, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and the Harford Community Action Agency donated school supplies and backpacks, and provided volunteers for the event. Kia’s Corner, a store located adjacent to The EPICENTER, offered a 75% discount on back-to-school items.

“It was a beautiful event. People really want to help, connect and reach out,” Porsha Phillips, a volunteer with Mountain Christian Church and The EPICENTER, said. “There are a lot of resources here that parents don’t know about. This is one place where they can learn about services all at once.”

Danielle Hanby, mother of eight, brought five children to the Back to School event.

“Haircuts for eight children can be very expensive,” she said. “This was incredible. It really helps out after we have spent so much for school supplies and clothes.”

Taina Perez from Edgewood brought her three children in for a trim.

“This is great,” Perez said. “It is very helpful to have this right before school starts.”

“We are deeply grateful to the local stylists who donated their skills to lift up local families,” said County Executive Barry Glassman. “Thanks to their efforts, and all of the organizations and businesses that came together for this event, many happy boys and girls started the new school year feeling confident and ready to learn.”

Photos:



Tini Quinones, age 4, looking forward to Pre-K at Bakerfield Elementary



Aidan Stewart, 9, before starting the fourth grade at William Paca Elementary



Edgewood Middle School eighth grader Jasson Stewart, 14, volunteering at the event



*Back row, from left: Kendra Slacum, 7; Caden Slacum, 10; Ava Rash 7; Front row, from left:
Emma Slacum, 4 and Alayna Rash, 5*

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