

REAL CHANGE

JESUS
Redwood Gospel
MISSIONS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSIONS

JULY 2026



City Kids Matters **More Than Ever!**

Every year, City Kids gives us a beautiful opportunity to come alongside children and families in our community.

On the surface, it may look straightforward. A child receives school supplies. A family enjoys a day of food, games, haircuts, prayer and encouragement. A parent goes home with one less burden to carry.

But City Kids has always been about much more than school supplies, and that's never been more important than it is now.

This year, many families in Santa Rosa are facing added pressure. Local schools are closing because of budget strain, declining enrollment and reduced funding. That is a significant change in our community, and for families already working hard to make ends meet, a change like this can create a heavy burden.

A different school may mean a longer drive. A new routine. More transportation challenges. More uncertainty for children. More stress for parents who are already doing their best.

And the burden is not only practical. It can be emotional and spiritual, too.

When a parent cannot provide what their child needs, it's discouraging, demoralizing. It's isolating. Families can feel like they are falling behind before the school year even begins. No one deserves to feel this way, particularly children.

That's why City Kids matters so much.

Children do not come to City Kids by themselves. Parents, grandparents and caregivers bring them. When we welcome a child, we also welcome the family. We get to meet parents who may feel tired, stretched thin or unsure where to turn. We get to show them kindness without shame. We get to remind them that God sees them, loves them and has not forgotten them.

City Kids is not just an event. It is an opportunity to build relationships.

Families meet churches. Children hear the Gospel. Parents discover support. And sometimes, a child becomes the doorway through which a whole family finds hope, community and the love of Christ.

That is the opportunity this year.

Serving the ENTIRE Family Builds **Our Entire Community!**



"Sometimes my children are disappointed because I can't give them everything they want and need. My salary just isn't enough."



"It's tough because you have to pay your rent. You have to pay for your food. So it's so hard to get backpacks and the school supplies."



"I'm a single mom. I don't have anybody to help me with my kids."

City Kids Is More Than a Backpack Giveaway

For over two decades, City Kids has helped struggling families prepare their children for a brighter school year while hearing about and seeing the love of Christ in action.

Now, with family budgets stretched tighter and local school changes creating new challenges, this outreach gives us an even greater opportunity to welcome more families and connect them with help. Plus, we let them know our Family Campus is here for them all year long.

Sign Your Backpack Tags!

Don't miss the chance to sign and return both Backpack Tags when you send your gift to provide backpacks and supplies.

Our prayer is that every child who receives a backpack also finds a personal note attached, reminding them they are seen, valued and loved. Please send yours by July 27.



The Festival Includes:

- Food
- Games and crafts
- Backpacks with age-specific school supplies
- Haircuts
- Bible giveaway
- Gospel presentation
- Family photos
- Book giveaway
- And more

This year, we're expecting at least 650 kids and their families!

City Kids is at Juilliard Park, 227 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 on August 1, from 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.





Each \$27.35 backpack you provide helps show God's love and gives a hurting family a step toward hope and healing.



"City Kids will be in children's memories... when the years pass, they'll remember, 'I received God's love through these wonderful people that took their time to buy backpacks and to fill them with beautiful thing.'"

"That backpack meant everything to me."

"God has promised us that, if we ask, He will provide us with what we need. And to me, City Kids is a living embodiment of that promise from God."



When a Haircut Becomes Ministry



Jerry Herrera and Donny Gonzalez have been friends since middle school. Today, that friendship has grown into a unique partnership that blesses people all over our community.

Donny started Healing Grace Foundation. Jerry owns West Coast Cuts Barbershop. Together, they serve people with food, prayer, encouragement and haircuts.

"We are here to help and we're here to work," Jerry says.

That simple willingness to serve has made them a blessing at City Kids, where Jerry and the West Coast Cuts team provide free haircuts for children and families.

For many families, a haircut before school is one more cost they can't afford.

Jerry understands that.

"If we weren't there, then they wouldn't have a haircut otherwise," he says.

And a haircut can make a big difference.

A child who starts school with a fresh haircut can feel more confident. More prepared. More like every other child walking into the classroom on the first day.

Donny has seen children nervous about getting in the chair. Then, once the haircut is finished, everything changes.

"Their whole demeanor, their whole character changes and you see them light up," he says.



Jerry Herrera of West Coast Cuts and Donny Gonzalez of Healing Grace Foundation use friendship and haircuts to help children and families feel loved and ready for a new school year.

That's why City Kids matters.

It gives families help they can feel. It gives volunteers a way to use their gifts. And it makes the love of Christ a reality that a child can see in the mirror.

Jerry says West Coast Cuts is *"an organization of yes men and yes women."* When there is a need, they want to say yes.

You can say yes, too.

City Kids needs people with all kinds of gifts. Some serve food. Some greet families. Some help with backpacks. Some pray. Some simply show up with a willing heart.

Find Your Place

Volunteer Opportunities!

City Kids isn't just a blessing to needy families; it's a blessing to everyone who volunteers, too! Over 30 churches host booths that bless the families who come, and we have dozens of opportunities for individuals, too!

Current Volunteer Opportunities:

- Greeting
- Guest check-in
- Set-up and tear-down
- First aid
- Backpack distribution
- And more!



City Kids is at Juilliard Park, 227 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 on August 1, from 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Sign up now or get help finding your place by contacting Tina Karns tkarns@rgm.org 707.578.1830 x 314 OR rgm.org/CityKids

Give a Backpack! Bless a Family!



For many families in our community, back-to-school season isn't about excitement. It's about pressure and fear.

Parents who are already working hard to keep up with rent, food, transportation and other basic needs now have to find money for backpacks, pencils, notebooks, crayons and all the supplies their children need to begin the school year.

And this year, with economic pressure and school changes creating even more strain, many families need encouragement and support.

That is why City Kids matters.

A backpack may seem like a simple gift, but for a child whose family cannot afford one, it can mean confidence on the first day of school.

And for a parent, it means relief.

But City Kids is about much more than backpacks and supplies. It's an opportunity to welcome families, pray with them, share the love of Christ and connect them with churches and people who care.

Children do not come to City Kids alone. Parents, grandparents and caregivers come with them. That means every backpack opens a door to bless an entire family.



Each \$27.35 given provides a backpack and school supplies for one child whose family can't afford them. Our goal is to hand out 650 backpacks this year, and anything you give by July 27 will help.



Remember to return your signed Backpack Tags when you send your gift!

Change The Future!

When you remember Redwood Gospel Missions in your will or estate plan, you help make sure future neighbors in need continue to receive food, shelter, recovery, God's love and practical care through ministries like City Kids.



For more information on legacy giving, contact Jeff Gilman at 707.578.1830.



REAL CHANGE is the newsletter of Redwood Gospel Missions
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