



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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HEALTH CONNECTIONS VAN WILL BRING BACKPACKS IN AUGUST Health careers information will be focus of backpack give-away

LEONARDTOWN, MD (July 24, 2006) – Although the thermometer still says summer, students in St. Mary's County will soon be starting back to school. Kids who visit the Health Connections Van Tuesday, August 8, will get a jump on back-to-school-shopping. Free backpacks, paper, pencils, pens and other give-away items will be available at the van from 10 a.m. – noon at Wal-Mart in Lexington Park and at the Lexington Park Library from 1-3 p.m.

The backpack give away, which is sponsored by the Southern Maryland Health Careers Education Task Force, is part of a larger educational effort. The goal of the task force is to build awareness of the important job health workers do in our community, and to encourage young people to begin to see themselves doing what it takes now to be a part of the health care careers workforce in the future. This is the second year the task force has given away backpacks.

Many people look at the end of summer and the start of the school as a second 'new year.' Though kids don't always think so, having life return to a more predictable pace offers kids an

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opportunity to re-focus and grow, according to St. Mary's County Health Department, which is providing funding for the backpacks this year. A new school year is a great time to talk to kids about what life will be like for them as they grow up. Helping kids see the connection between health and happiness, and doing well in school and doing well in life, is the aim of the Health Careers Awareness Task Force.

Along with the health department, St. Mary's Hospital, St. Mary's Nursing Center, Chesapeake Potomac Home Health Agency, and St. Mary's County Department of Economic and Community Development, are committed to teaching local kids about health careers. These organizations are making plans to raise health career awareness in the county's high schools and middle schools, and have scheduled an Open House and Job Fair at St. Mary' Hospital during National Health Career Awareness Month in October. In addition, they are laying the groundwork to organize a mock accident in the Spring at the College of Southern Maryland, Leonardtown Campus, to demonstrate to kids the variety of health careers that are involved in responding to the emergency, and in providing treatment and follow-up.

For more information about the Health Careers Education Task Force, and the backpack give away, call the health department's office of Human Resources at 301-475-4330.

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Photo caption: Jill Bodamer, RN, director of Operations for Chesapeake-Potomac Home Health Agency fills a back pack with school supplies and health career information.

