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Fathers and Men United for a Better Trenton Back to School Cookout

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Trentonian Photo/SCOTT KETTERER Trentonians line up for burgers and hotdogs being served up by the Living Faith World Outreach Ministries of Ewing.

TRENTON — Cadwalader Park was once again the home to a community friendly event on Saturday, despite the clouds and occasional rain.

Fathers and Men United for a Better Trenton held their sixth back-to -school family cookout which drew a crowd of around 2,000 people.

Local business and church organizations donated time and money to make the event a success, said organizers Wayne Council and Lee Hood of Fathers and Men United.

The event also brought out parents and youngsters seeking their free back-to-school backpack, filled with calculators, rulers, pencils and basic school supplies. In total, 500 backpacks were handed out, Jason Rogers also of Fathers and Men United told The Trentonian.

According to Council and Lee, the group handed out tickets that had to be presented in order for parents to claim their backpacks. According to Rogers, the bags were provided by Horizon Health of

New Jersey and Fathers and Men United for a Better Trenton stuffed the bags so that Trenton youngsters could have a head start for the upcoming school year. In addition to the backpacks, food and festivities, the NAACP was out registering residents to vote. Trenton's fire and EMS crews provided a touch-a-truck exhibit that EMS Chief Grady Griffin, said was aimed at showing kids more of what the job of a firefighter and EMS first responder has to do on a daily basis. Also, the emergency services provided smoke detectors and fire safety tips.

In the spirit of the event The Hip-Hop Catz and the K-9 Crew took to the stage to bring life to books written by New Jersey author William E. Mackson. The books series uses hip-hop rhymes to promote reading.

Mackson said he wants to be able to show Trenton youth that reading can be fun through his series.

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