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## COMING TOGETHER

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### 200 high schoolers receive donated backpacks, supplies

For Thomas E. Douglas, his will to help others has led others to offer an extended hand to his aid. Douglas is a pastor at Holy Temple Holiness Church of Deliverance in Lauderhill, and has made it his mission to local students in his community.

"We try to eliminate some of the obstacles these students have," Douglas said.

For the past five years, Douglas has pulled all of his resources together to help facilitate local students in the community with the educational and emotional support they're lacking. Although his work has brought in together countless individuals, groups and businesses, his mission has stretched even farther from Broward to West Palm

Beach in the form of school supplies.

"From my personal assessment, the way he goes about selfishly interacting with these under privileged kids, it's quite remarkable. And he does this all in the name of social equality," said Seth Beoku-Betts, president of Betts and Gambles. The Boynton Beach-based investment and development company, Betts and Gambles joined efforts with the Law office of Chalik and Chalik to help Douglas continue his mission by providing 200 backpacks filled with school supplies to the incoming freshmen of Boyd H. Anderson High School in Lauderdale Lakes.

For Douglas, helping the students in his program, the Julia Williams Youth Out-

reach Education Enhancement Program, along with the students at Boyd Anderson is his main focus.

"We spoke with Pastor Douglas and he thought this would be another good way that we can help with the community. Pastor Douglas is such a good role model and does so much with so little, that we will try to support his efforts as much as we can," said Jason Chalik of the Plantation-based law firm.

Several months earlier, the firm donated four laptops to the program. The program provides tutoring and mentoring to high school and college students. The students are tutored by various members of the community such as teachers, college students, law-

yers and even city staff. Douglas provides as much as he can to the 44 students with his own money.

"We try to do as much as we can to make the students comfortable in the group," Douglas said.

For the backpack donation, Douglas turned to several of the program's partners to raise funds to buy school supplies and backpacks. The backpacks were distributed during the school's Freshman Invasion, a form of open house for the students. This year's class saw 900 students enrolled. In order to distribute the backpacks and supplies fairly, the students and families were alerted of the donation and the first 200 students in line received the items. "We didn't give them

everything they needed, but we gave them a start," Douglas said.

As the students plow through the school year, Douglas will continue his efforts to help students with what they need, such as their partnership with the Princeton Review to provide tutoring along with acquiring more laptops for his program students. Along the way, Chalik & Chalik and Betts and Gambles plan to be right behind him, helping in any way they can.

*Holy Temple Holiness Church of Deliverance is at 3798 NW 19th St. in Lauderhill. Visit [www.Holytempleholinesschurch.net](http://www.Holytempleholinesschurch.net) or call 954-914-0289.*