Ethan Resnick's The Backpack Project Collects Over 400 Backpacks for New Jersey Students and Families

SHORT HILLS, NJ, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For many students, the start of a new school year comes with new clothes, shoes, school supplies, and a backpack ready to carry it all. But for about 1 in every 4 students in U.S. public schools, roughly 16 million children, those basic back-to-school essentials are simply out of reach. For families already working to meet basic needs, the start of the school year can bring added pressure as they try to provide the items children need to feel prepared, confident, and excited for the year ahead.


Ethan Resnick

Resnick had already seen how everyday essentials could make a difference through his volunteer work with Nourish.NJ in Morristown. In eighth grade, he began volunteering with the organization's Breakfast Bags initiative, delivering bags filled with breakfast items to people experiencing food insecurity. That experience introduced him to the many basic needs families in his community face and pushed him to think about other ways he could help. He knew backpacks, school supplies, and food were all part of helping children feel ready to learn, and he understood that backpacks were also needed beyond the classroom, especially in local shelters where people without permanent housing often have to carry their belongings with them. Seeing those needs firsthand eventually inspired him to create The Backpack Project.

The Backpack Project is a community service effort that collects new and lightly used backpacks and school supplies for children and families in need. After recognizing the need through his volunteer work, Resnick found the perfect place to start getting donations: his own unused sports backpacks. Having played soccer since he was five years old, he had accumulated several bags that were still in good condition, but no longer being used. Instead of letting them sit at home, Resnick saw a chance to give those backpacks a second life with students and families

who could use them. From there, he began asking others to donate backpacks and school supplies of their own, growing The Backpack Project into a larger community collection effort.



Ethan Resnick delivering backpack donations to Nourish.NJ

To date, Resnick has collected over 400 backpacks, dozens of school supply bags, and additional toiletry items. The Backpack Project works with Nourish.NJ and schools in Newark, New Jersey, to distribute the donations to students and families in need, helping make the start of the school year feel more manageable.

The Backpack Project eventually expanded beyond backpacks as new needs came up. After Resnick began collecting backpacks, Nourish.NJ told him that its emergency toiletry closet was almost empty. Resnick saw another opportunity to help and organized a collection of travel-sized and full-sized toiletries. He reached out to his soccer team at Morristown-Beard for support, and within just a few days, the group collected enough items to help restock the closet.


Ethan Resnick with donation bags collected through The Backpack Project

Nourish.NJ has seen firsthand how Resnick's efforts have helped support the organization and the families it serves. "Ethan's backpack collection is a fabulous way to support our neighbors," said Heidi Griffee, Director of Volunteer Services at Nourish.NJ. "We are so appreciative of his time, effort, and generosity in helping make a difference in our community."

One of the most meaningful moments of this project came when Resnick delivered backpacks for the new school year and saw a young boy with a backpack that Resnick had donated the

previous year. Seeing something he had owned actually being used by a student made the impact feel real and personal, showing him that even a simple donation could continue supporting a child long after it left his hands. “Backpacks seem like a small thing to need, but when a child starts school, it is important that they have essential items,” Resnick shared. “A backpack, school supplies, and food are essential for learning. I’m really happy that through this project, I can contribute to Nourish.NJ’s efforts and help provide items that families in our community truly need.”



Donations from The Backpack Project

Resnick plans to continue collecting backpacks and school supplies while looking for new ways to support Nourish.NJ and local New Jersey families. As back-to-school season begins, he hopes The Backpack Project can help more students start the year feeling prepared and encourage others to look around their own homes and communities for items that could be given a second life.

To support Ethan Resnick and The Backpack Project, please follow The Backpack Project on Instagram and donate new or lightly used backpacks, school supplies, sports bags, and toiletry items by emailing backpackproject26@gmail.com.

About Ethan Resnick
Ethan Resnick is a student at Morristown Beard School in Morristown, New Jersey. He is a four-year high school athlete on the soccer, basketball, and golf teams. Resnick has been recognized with a Community Service Award for his involvement with Habitat for Humanity.

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