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**Interfaith Community Services**

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## **ICS Gifts of Love Program Needs Backpacks, School Supply Donations to Help More Than 500 Children in Need**

While summer vacation has just begun for most Pima County students, a new school year is just around the corner bringing with it added challenges for families struggling to make ends meet. Interfaith Community Services is asking for the community's help to get children grades K-12 from low-income families ready to go back to class for the 2015-2016 school year. Through its "Gifts of Love" program, ICS is collecting donations of school supplies to distribute to families in financial crisis. Needed items include backpacks, binders, notebook paper, spiral notebooks, scissors, glue sticks, rulers, folders, and markers. A complete list of needed supplies by grade level is available at [www.icstucson.org](http://www.icstucson.org).

The Gifts of Love program allows a child to go to school with confidence, supporting their academic success. ICS Social Services Director Terri Patt-Smith explains: "The families that turn to us are struggling to meet their basic needs—food, housing, medical needs. Back-to-school supplies can cost \$50 per child or more, and these families just can't afford it. Children are embarrassed when they show up at school without the things they've been asked to bring." ICS's Gifts of Love ensure that children start the school year with the tools they need to learn and succeed.

"Holding a collection drive is a great summer project for businesses or community groups," Patt-Smith adds.

ICS has set a goal to help more than 500 students with supplies this year. Donations of school supplies can be dropped off Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at ICS's northwest office at 2820 W. Ina Road or from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday at the ICS eastside office at 8701 E. Old Spanish Trail. Distribution to qualifying families will take place on Monday, July 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or until supplies last.

**About ICS:** Observing 30 years of service to the Pima County community, Interfaith Community Services (ICS) provides food, job assistance, and emergency financial assistance to residents in need and mobilizes volunteers to assist seniors and disabled individuals with Mobile Meals, transportation, home repairs, calls and visits, and health and safety referrals. ICS offers compassionate support by connecting over 750 volunteers and 82 faith community partners with our community's most vulnerable residents. From nutritious food to health evaluations to a ride to the doctor's office, ICS assists more than 36,000 people a year. ICS has received Charity Navigator's highest rating of four stars for five years in a row for its fiscal responsibility and best practices.

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