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Academy got free backpacks on the 1st day of school

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DETROIT (FOX 2) - "I think every day will be a great day."

That's what one kid said while looking at the pile of pencils, notebooks and supplies that fell out of his brand new backpack. He was among dozens of other students at the Detroit Leadership Academy to receive school supplies surprise on their first day of school.

As the kids congregated in a classroom, a curtain was pulled back to reveal a mountain of new backpacks. Donated by the Kids in Need Foundation and the Butzel Long Lawfirm, it was an impactful first day for the students.

"Do we pay the rent this month? Do we pay the electricity bill? Food?" said Pete Tack of the Kids in Need Foundation. "School supplies are one of those things that come at the bottom of that budget and we try to fill that need."

For families living with low wages, rent always eats first. After that, food and health care and transportation. If school supplies ever makes it into the list of things kids bring to school, it's often at the bottom of any list of things to buy.

But that doesn't make the items any less important.

"Their behavior improves, their self-esteem improves, their test scores are positively impacted. Just having those core school supplies makes a big difference," said Tack.

That big difference extended beyond just the recipients of the donations, and to the donors as well.

"By far the coolest day of work I've ever had in my career. It's just so gratifying to give back," said Paul Mersino, of Butzel Long.

And with their new toys, the students also set themselves goals, a natural inclination for any kid ready to take on the year. So what was top of mind for Taylor Williams?

"Listening, meeting my goals in math and reading," she said.

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And now, she has the tools to meet those goals.