

BACK TO School  
Celebration

27<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, August 15th 2026

# OUR PROGRAMS

For twenty seven (27) years, the Back to School Celebration has worked diligently to keep the momentum growing. Throughout the years, we have serviced thousands of families statewide by providing the necessary resources for each child to be successfully prepared for their school year. Our program, which started with only 600 backpacks and few school supplies at a single site, has now expanded to 15,000 backpacks and supplies at ten community sites throughout the state.

Today, Families can bring their children to our annual celebration to any of our following locations: Central Falls, Cumberland, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, Cranston and West Warwick. Each year, the Back to School Celebration Board of Directors and Steering Committee members work to build strong community partnership across the state, which has enabled us to expand our programs. For over two decades, the Back to School Celebration benefited from the leadership and guidance of our honorary founding member, Jorge Cardenas. We hope to continue his vision and expand on what he started with so much passion and dedication.

## Our Programs:

Annual Back to School Celebration- The Back to School Celebration Committee organizes Twelve (12) community-based sites across Rhode Island. In a single day, our volunteers distribute backpacks and school supplies to 15,000 students and provided families with a day filled with educational information, resources, entertainment, food and music.

The Back to School Celebration actively engages families in their children's education and provides students with the tools they need to start a new school year.

Backpacker Program- BTSCRI strives to address hunger and food insecurities. We provide families in need with access to nutritious food through our Backpacker Program. Every week during the school year, over 250 students in Providence Schools are provided with backpacks filled with nutritious food.

These programs would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. Thousands of children and families will benefit from your kindness. Thank you to all for your ongoing commitment to this cause and we hope to continue collaborating in future with the Back to School of Rhode Island.



**Founders:**

Jorge Cardenas  
Melvin Bell

**Board of Directors:**

Grace Gonzalez  
**President**

Doris de los Santos  
**Vice President**

Vacant  
**Treasurer**

Emily Garthee  
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Ida Valentin  
**Member at Large**

Leah McPhail  
**Member at Large**

**Sponsors:**

- Job Lot
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- Neighborhood Health Plan of RI
- Amica
- Washington Trust
- Bristol Savings
- Ocean State Job Lot
- Pappitto Connection
- RI Department of Health
- RI Energy
- Sodexo School Services
- Treasurer's Office
- United Way of RI
- WPRI 12
- Providence Schools
- RI Foundation

August, 15th, 2026

Dear Friends and Supporters,  
On Behalf of the Back-to-School Celebration of Rhode Island Board of Directors and Steering Committee Members, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for your support in making this year's celebration a success. For twenty seven (27) years, the Back-to-School Celebration has worked diligently to keep the momentum growing in efforts to reach our most vulnerable population throughout Rhode Island. We hope to continue our vision and expand on what was started with so much passion and dedication.



In 1999, the Back-to-School Celebration was founded by Jorge Cardenas and Melvin Bell. Since its inception, Sodexo School Services helped in the development and growth of the "Back to School Celebration" and as a result, it has become an increasingly popular and eagerly anticipated event, which continues to build wide support throughout our communities. Throughout the years, we have serviced thousands of families statewide by providing the necessary resources for each child to be successfully prepared for their school

year. Our program, which started back in 1999, with just 600 children who were able to receive school supplies at the West End Community Center, has now expanded to thousands of backpacks and school supplies at twelve community locations throughout our state. Families can now bring their children to our annual celebration to any of our following locations: Central Falls, Cumberland, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, Cranston and West Warwick.

This event would not be possible without your contributions and support. Thousands of children and families will benefit from your kindness. Thank you all for your ongoing commitment to this cause and we hope to continue with this great partnership we have developed over the years.

Sincerely,

Grace Gonzalez  
President

# Discover the smart way to save for the future

[CollegeBoundSaver.com](https://CollegeBoundSaver.com)



## Have questions?

Scan the QR code to schedule time to talk to one of our college savings specialists.

## CollegeBound Saver



James A. Diossa  
Rhode Island General Treasurer

CollegeBound Saver is a program of the office of Rhode Island General Treasurer, James A. Diossa.



On behalf of the City of Providence, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island for 27 years of service to students and families across our state. Thank you to your dedicated volunteers, partners and supporters for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's students. Your efforts are making a lasting difference in the lives of children and families throughout our communities.

*Brett P. Smiley*  
Mayor Brett P. Smiley



***Ocean State***

**JOB  
LOT** <sup>®</sup>

# OUR COMMUNITY CAN COUNT US OS.



# BRISTOL COUNTY SAVINGS BANK®

*Commitment. Stability. Community.*

PROUD TO SUPPORT THE 27<sup>HT</sup> ANNUAL BACK  
TO SCHOOL CELEBRATION RI.

[bristolcountysavings.com](http://bristolcountysavings.com)





# The SUPPORTIVE way to bank.

Coastal1 Credit Union was founded on the principle of "people helping people." That's why we're proud to support **The Back To School Celebration.**

The BTSC provides for an often overlooked part of school readiness for children, school supplies. Being prepared bolsters a student's ability to achieve. Because we believe that supporting our community is the smarter way to bank.



**The smarter way to bank**

[Coastal1.org](https://Coastal1.org)

# Tips to Prepare for a Healthy School Year



## Here's a checklist of some health supplies and steps you can take to keep your family healthy and safe:

- ☐ Schedule your child's annual wellness checkup and dental cleanings.
- ☐ Stay up to date with your child's vaccines, including scheduling flu vaccines this fall.
- ☐ If your child has an underlying medical condition, be sure to discuss a plan with your pediatrician.
- ☐ Update medication orders for your school nurse.
- ☐ Update chronic health action plans (asthma, seizure, etc.) with your pediatrician and deliver them to school prior to the first day.
- ☐ Find resources for yourself and your child if you feel stressed, sad, or worried during the transition back to school.
- ☐ Talk to your teen about substance use. Visit [PreventOverdoseRI.org](https://PreventOverdoseRI.org) for resources and support.



For more back-to-school  
health tips, visit  
[health.ri.gov/backtoschool](https://health.ri.gov/backtoschool)



#TeamUnited is all-in on uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.

# ROOT CAUSES. UNITED SOLUTIONS.

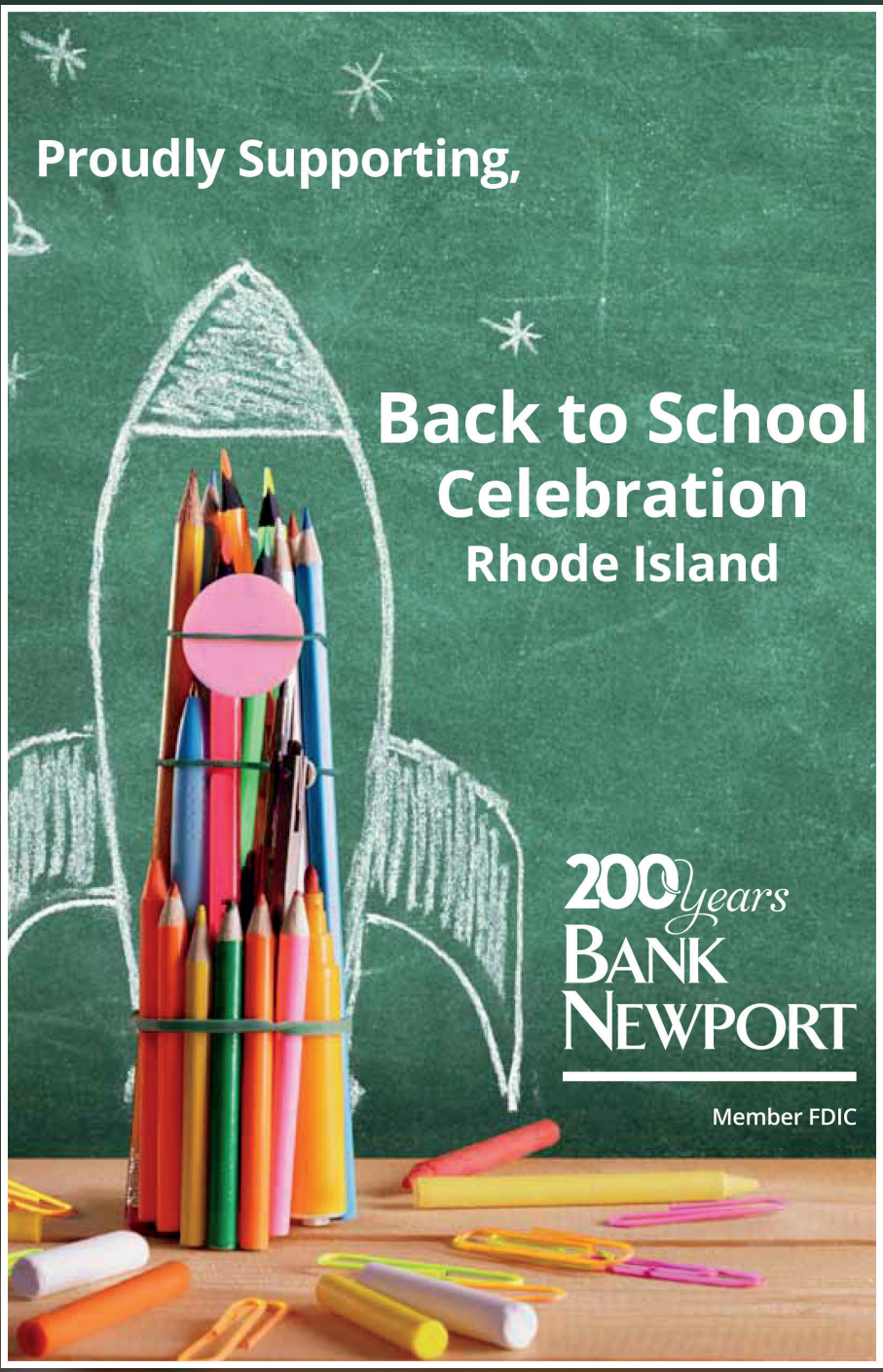
We are committed to inspiring children to fall in love with reading and ensure that all Rhode Island children walk into the classroom with the tools to learn.



[www.unitedwayri.org](http://www.unitedwayri.org)

United Way of Rhode Island





Proudly Supporting,

# Back to School Celebration Rhode Island

200*Years*  
**BANK  
NEWPORT**

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TRUST®**

**BEST-IN-STATE  
BANKS**





# JUNTOS

♥ **CVS**Health.

Latin Colleague  
Resource Group





ANK  
ou!  
to our  
/volunteers!





## Creating strong connections between families and schools.

Cox is proud to support innovative educational opportunities throughout our communities.

We proudly support the Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island.



Find out more at [cox.com](https://www.cox.com)





# *Meals on Wheels*

OF RHODE ISLAND

mobilebeacon®

Mobile Beacon is  
proud to support  
**Back to School RI**  
and the students,  
teachers, and staff  
of schools throughout  
Rhode Island.

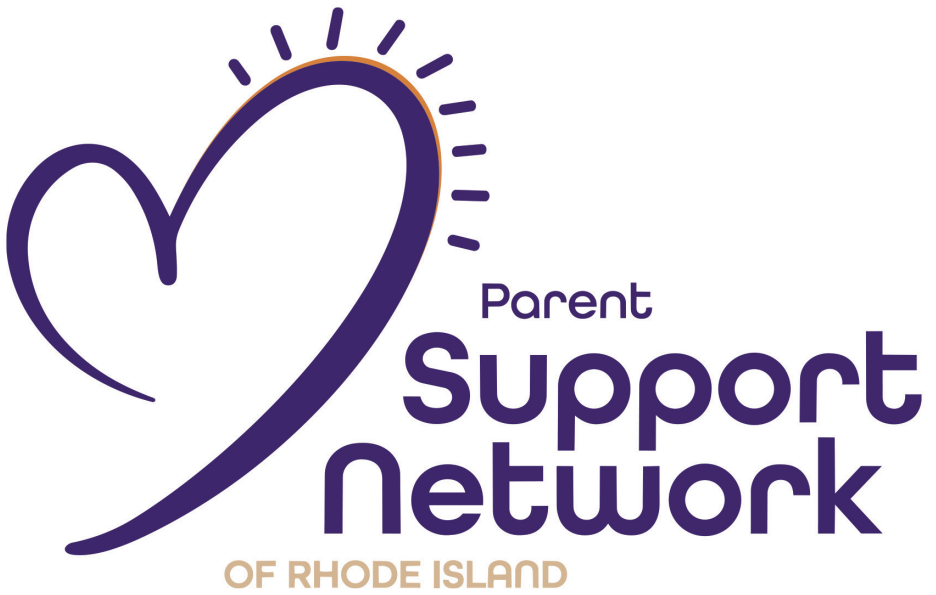


**BTSRI**.ORG  
Back to School of Rhode Island



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[www.mobilebeacon.org](http://www.mobilebeacon.org)



Congratulations on your  
27<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

Proud to support

# Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island



Federally insured by NCUA



# Sodexo is proud to sponsor the Back To School Celebration

Sodexo is proud to serve as the primary sponsor of the Back-To-School Celebration since 1999. We hope that the school supplies provided at the annual Back To School Celebration will help students to prosper as they take on challenges of the new school year.

As always, our sincere thanks go out to our co-sponsors, business partners, and volunteers, for helping to ensure that the Back-To-School Celebration is a continuing success.



*Making every day  
a better day!*

Sodexo is the world leader in Quality of Daily Life Solutions – a strategic partner of business and organizations, creating, managing, and delivering comprehensive service solutions that improve our clients' performance and development.



[www.sodexoUSA.com](http://www.sodexoUSA.com)

**sodexo**  
*Making every day a better day*



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Amica Insurance is proud to support

# Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island

Amica.com 866-51-Amica (26422)

Amica Mutual Insurance Company, Lincoln, Rhode Island

**Amica**  
Empathy is our best policy



**Congratulations on your  
27<sup>th</sup> anniversary!**



# Papitto Opportunity Connection

Congratulations on your  
27<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



# Providence Schools

Congratulations on your  
27<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

# Cardi's FURNITURE

Congratulations on your  
27<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



# Rhode Island Energy™

a PPL company



## Powering a strong start to the school year

We're proud to support students and families across Rhode Island as they head back to class.

Wishing you a safe, healthy, and successful year ahead.

**It's not just energy—  
It's your energy.**



**GRIECO**  
**AUTOMOTIVE GROUP**





## FREE BACKPACKS SCHOOL SUPPLIES

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2026**

**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**"FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED"**  
**Until Supplies Last**

**STUDENTS MUST BE PRESENT TO RECEIVE A BACKPACK**

| Cities        | Site                                    | Address                           |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Central Falls | Veteran's Memorial Elementary School    | 150 Fuller Ave, Central Falls     |
| Cranston      | YMCA                                    | 1225 Park Ave, Cranston           |
| Cumberland    | Garvin Memorial Elementary              | 1364 Diamond Hill Rd, Cumberland  |
| Newport       | East Bay Community Action Program       | 6 John H. Chafee Blvd, Newport    |
| Pawtucket     | Potter - Burns Elementary School        | 973 Newport Ave, Pawtucket        |
| Pawtucket     | Samuel Slater Middle School             | 281 Mineral Spring Ave, Pawtucket |
| Providence    | Nathanael Greene Middle School          | 721 Chalkstone Ave, Providence    |
| Providence    | Student Registration & Placement Center | 325 Ocean St, Providence          |
| Providence    | United Way of Rhode Island              | 50 Valley St, Providence          |
| Providence    | West End Community Center               | 109 Bucklin St, Providence        |
| West Warwick  | Thundermist Health Center               | 186 Providence St, West Warwick   |
| Woonsocket    | Woonsocket Middle School                | 60 Florence Dr, Woonsocket        |

If you can't attend for safety reasons, please call United Way's 211 after the event to ask about picking up a backpack. Supplies are limited and first come, first served.





*Congratulations on your  
27<sup>th</sup> anniversary!*

**Lo más importante  
que usted puede  
hacer mientras esté  
aquí, es asegurarse de  
que el mundo sea  
mejor cuando usted  
ya no esté.**

Uno de los grandes logros en la vida es la  
capacidad de dejar un legado duradero.

Nosotros podemos ayudar.



**RHODE ISLAND  
FOUNDATION**

Fundación de Rhode Island [rifoundation.org/legacy](http://rifoundation.org/legacy)  
o puede llamar al 401-274-4565



# Centreville Bank®

Progress on  
Purpose



Ensuring that students have the **tools** they need to succeed.

The Back to School Celebration of RI ensures that at every age, children are ready to be engaged learners, and are supported by their family, schools, and community. **THAT'S WHAT WE CALL PROGRESS ON PURPOSE.**





# The Easy Choice for Affordable Care

Since 1994, Neighborhood has been a trusted resource for you, your family and our community. We're committed to offering high-quality, affordable health insurance for all Rhode Islanders. It's easy to focus on your health knowing that we've got you covered.

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island is proud to support our community.

1-401-459-6075 (TTY 711)  
[www.nhpri.org](http://www.nhpri.org)

