

S.O.S. (Supply Our Students) FAQs

What is the mission of S.O.S?

We provide *new*, pre-packaged, school supply packets, for low-income qualified students in pre-K through high school in Fort Bend and Stafford ISDs.

Why new; why not collect used supplies?

The vision of S.O.S. is to give our neighbor students the same first-day confidence that our own school children receive. We believe that something as simple as new notebooks, crayons and pencils can go a long way to instilling confidence in these students that they will be successful this coming year.

Could you collect new supplies from church members?

In early years, we collected supplies, purchased the remainder and made up our own packets. Very quickly we discovered it was a better use of funds and time to purchase pre-packaged packets. The vendor gets the supply lists from the school districts to make sure we provide what is needed.

However, if someone does want to donate new supplies, we will take those to East Fort Bend, which makes up packets throughout the school year. Nothing will go to waste!

What is the suggested donation amount?

We suggest \$30 per packet. But S.O.S. is grateful for any amount donated. **Please be aware that a donation of \$100 will purchase four packets!**

What has been done to be a good steward of the funds?

We are working again with a local supplier, Wharton Paper Company, which embraces our mission. Wharton has worked their numbers to keep the price per packet down. This local company also uses local volunteers to assemble the packets. We use church volunteers to staff registration and distribution.

How many school packets are handed out?

We will distribute 400 packets in 2010.

Is that less than previous years?

Yes, we did reduce our order this year, adjusting for the economy. We also are not going to provide to Holley Elementary this year, as we understand they have another ministry working to get new supplies into the school.

Are there ever any packets left over?

This year, 2010, we reserved all 400 packets in less than three hours of registration. In the past, when we could afford to buy more packets, there were about 20-30 packets left after the registration day. In those years, EFBHNM distributed on an as-needed basis after the drive was over.

What about backpacks?

We purchase backpacks only after we have covered the costs of the packets and believe we are filling a need. There have not been sufficient funds to do this for several years.

How is need determined?

Any child or teen whose family resides in East Fort Bend County (Stafford, Arcola, Fresno, Missouri City, Sugar Land) is eligible. Many, but not all families, have received assistance at EFBHNM, where they were previously screened for need. Some families are experiencing temporary financial crisis; some parents are on Disability or a fixed income; many live at or below poverty level.

Aren't there other school supply programs in the greater Houston area?

Yes, and all are needed. Of the approximate 70,000 students in FBISD alone, an estimated 30% live in economically disadvantaged homes. That equates to more than 23,000 students. Several churches, ministries and businesses have programs. Some programs help specific schools only; some only the Ft. Bend schools that fall in Houston/Harris County. **We choose to serve students in East Fort Bend, and to provide complete packets to all grades, not just elementary.**

Is there a problem with people 'working the system'?

The various groups and ministries that supply packets do compare lists for duplication. But with as many as register, we have little duplication, and most are a simple misunderstanding.

How can I get this on my Christ Church record of giving?

If you write a check, make it out to "CUMC," and put SOS in the memo line. If you give cash, attach a note with your name to the cash, and we will do our best to have it credited.

How can I help with S.O.S.?

Contact one of the chairs listed below. You can list S.O.S. as an interest during the Christ Church annual pledge drive in the fall. All year long you can donate to S.O.S. through the Gift Unto Others catalog.

Who is the church contact for S.O.S. and who are the S.O.S chairs?

Renee Teel, is Director of Missions, RENEE@CUMCSL.ORG. The S.O.S. chairs are: Sue Fredrickson, 281-980-3235, SGFREDRICKSON@COMCAST.NET; or Debbie Barger, 281-778-5208, BARGER.DA@GMAIL.COM.