



Presented by



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NOLA Back 2 School Backpack Distribution Presented by Shell At Xavier University of Louisiana Helps Students Start the School Year with Essential School Supplies**

New Orleans, La. – The 2022 **NOLA Back 2 School Fest** presented by Shell will provide 4,000 students in grades K-6 with **free backpacks filled with essential school supplies** – Saturday, **July 30 from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m.** at the Xavier University Center, 4980 Dixon St, New Orleans, on Xavier’s south campus.

Parents and caregivers who have pre-registered students in grades K-6 at [www.nolabacktoschoolfest.org](http://www.nolabacktoschoolfest.org) will pick up their child’s backpacks and supplies in a drive through distribution alongside the Xavier University Center. Parents/caregivers who utilize public transportation or arrive on foot or by bicycle can pick up backpacks at the entrance of the St. Joseph Center located directly across Broadway Street from the Xavier University Center.

"The NOLA Back 2 School Backpack Giveaway event presented by Shell is a powerful message to our children that this community supports them and believes in them. Through the Giveaway, we make it possible for them to return to the classroom equipped with the tools they need to succeed," said **Reynold Verret, President of Xavier University of Louisiana**. "Having your own school supplies brings a sense of readiness and confidence for the school year. Educational equity, including access to supplies, is fundamental."

"This is all about getting kids in our community set up for success in the classroom," said Celeste Jefferson, Maintenance and Construction Manager at Shell Norco. "Our volunteers pack care and compassion into those backpacks along with the supplies."

Students from throughout the Greater New Orleans area are eligible to receive the free backpacks and school supplies, however, students **must be pre-registered in advance at [www.nolabacktoschoolfest.org](http://www.nolabacktoschoolfest.org)**. In addition to the backpacks and supplies,

parents/caregivers will receive a bag filled with helpful information to connect them with vital community resources and providers that offer direct assistance.

“When students are prepared with supplies, we also support teachers,” said **Jennifer LaCoste, Executive Director of the Greater New Orleans STEM Initiative (GNO STEM)**. “Teachers often spend their own money to purchase supplies so their students can succeed. The backpack and school supplies provided by Shell help students and teachers get off to a strong start!”

The sixth annual NOLA Back 2 School Fest presented by Shell is hosted in partnership Xavier University of Louisiana and the Greater New Orleans STEM Initiative (GNO STEM).

To register to participate and to learn more, visit [www.nolabacktoschoolfest.org](http://www.nolabacktoschoolfest.org) or email [nolaback2school@nolabacktoschoolfest.org](mailto:nolaback2school@nolabacktoschoolfest.org).

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### **About Xavier University of Louisiana**

*Xavier University of Louisiana, America’s only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier’s College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.*

*Established in 1925, by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African American and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master’s programs, have provided Xavier students (2815 undergraduates and 787 graduates) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula is to provide students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu) or contact Regi Reyes at (504) 520-5240 or [rreyes@xula.edu](mailto:rreyes@xula.edu).*