



Presented by



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Contact:

Leslie Doles

[leslie@dolespr.com](mailto:leslie@dolespr.com) | 504-442-8983

## NOLA Back 2 School Backpack Distribution Presented by Shell Helps Students Start the School Year with Essential School Supplies

**NEW ORLEANS, July 17, 2023** -- The 2023 **NOLA Back 2 School Fest presented by Shell** will provide 5,000 students in grades K-6 with **free backpacks filled with essential school supplies – Saturday, July 29 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, 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.

“This is about giving the children in our community a great first step as they start a new school year,” said Colette Hirstius, Shell’s Senior Vice President, Gulf of Mexico. “Our volunteers are passionate about this city we call home, and we love putting smiles on the faces of these kids!”

“The annual NOLA Back 2 School Backpack Giveaway presented by Shell reminds parents in our community that their children are supported, precious, and valued. We want to make it possible for these children to return to their classes this fall equipped with the tools necessary to succeed,” said Dr. Reynold Verret, President of Xavier University of Louisiana. “Educational equity, which includes access to necessary school supplies, is fundamental in building readiness and confidence. These students will grow and go on to pursue their dreams as they develop their talents and explore their interests, but helping to provide a solid foundation that they can build upon is key.”

Students from throughout the Greater New Orleans area are eligible to receive a free backpack 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 seventh 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).

###