



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

# **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Helps Distribute Backpacks to an Estimated 1,000 Children at New Rochelle HOPE Community Services Back to School Fair**

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August 19, 2019

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YONKERS, NY – On Saturday, August 17, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins joined HOPE Community Services Executive Director Walt Ritz, staff, and volunteers to distribute backpacks and school supplies to approximately 1,000 underserved children at the nonprofit organization's 6th Annual New Rochelle Backpack Give Out.

HOPE Community Services staff and volunteers transformed Chevrolet of New Rochelle (Truck Center) into a giant Back to School Fair, complete with waterslides, music, rides, games, a fire truck, and burgers.

With the upcoming academic school year less than one month away, each student received one backpack filled with notebooks, pens, pencils, and more.

NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "I hope today's event lets little kids know, that there is a community that cares about them, about their success, and is interested in making sure their school experience is great because we know that education is the great equalizer and if they do well in school, they will do well in life."

Walt Ritz, Executive Director, HOPE Community Services said, "This event was a true community endeavor. The New Rochelle Back to School Fair would not be possible without the support of our community leaders, like Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. We are so grateful for her help giving out backpacks and school

supplies to the kids.”

About New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins In 2019, Andrea Stewart-Cousins made history when she became the first woman to lead a legislative house in New York’s Capitol. Stewart-Cousins was elected by her colleagues to serve as Leader of the Senate Democratic Conference in December 2012, becoming the first female leader of a legislative conference in New York State history. She was first elected to the State Senate in 2006 and currently represents Greenburgh, part of White Plains, part of New Rochelle, part of Yonkers and Scarsdale. Learn more about Leader Stewart-Cousins [here](#).

About HOPE Community Services:

With the assistance and support of a host of volunteers, HOPE opened the doors of its first Soup Kitchen in 1984. Since its early days, HOPE has grown to become one of the largest emergency food pantries and soup kitchens in the region.

Although HOPE Community Services was founded to respond to hunger in the community, it quickly became apparent that food was not the only thing that clients were lacking. Clothing, language skills, emotional support, immigration services, and other daily necessities were also needed. HOPE Community Services expanded its services to meet the needs of its diverse client population, including the Housing Stabilization Program to prevent homelessness; City of New Rochelle Re-housing Initiative for eligible homeless residents of Westchester; The Refuge transitional housing program for LGBTQ youth; and The Homeless Resource Center.