

School's Cool

Frequently Asked Questions



What is School's Cool?

Every student who participates in The Banyan Community program receives a new backpack and school supplies every year, along with the expectation to succeed. Students attending Risen Christ and DeLaSalle Catholic Schools also receive uniform expenses.

What is the Banyan?

The Banyan Community is a Christian Community Development Corporation (CCDC) that builds relationships and improves the lives of both youth and adults living in the East Phillips neighborhood of south Minneapolis. Their programs are divided into three strategies: Develop Youth, Strengthen Families and Create Community. Visit their website at www.banyancommunity.org for more information.

Why are they called the Banyan?

The word Banyan comes from a Banyan Tree. Banyan trees have a large center trunk. Long branches reach out and then drop a vine to create another tree. Their vision is that Jesus Christ is the center trunk; the new trees are the families and children in their community. A grove of trees, or large community, is created around the center trunk.

How is St. Bart's involved?

St. Bartholomew strives to walk with the two feet of social ministry: **charity** (social service) and **justice** (social change).

The St. Bart's Banyan Committee volunteers work with the Banyan Community to obtain two types of patrons: **sponsors** and **donors**. **Sponsors** provide all the necessary supplies needed for a specific child attending Risen Christ or DeLaSalle Catholic Schools. **Donors** provide backpacks and supplies for students attending public school. Cash donations are also accepted in both instances so that volunteers may use the funds to shop for the School's Cool Program.

Parishioners provide the necessary tools (social service). The Banyan provides a safe environment where "School's Cool" is the approach and success is the expectation. This foundation and belief in education in turn has a positive impact for the families in the East Phillips neighborhood (social change).

How successful has the program been?

Every year the Banyan program has grown to include more children, and St. Bart's parishioners have met the challenge of meeting the "School's Cool" needs. The children participating in the program, and their parents, are required to meet the standards set by the Banyan in order to participate in the Banyan program. The primary educational success of participants has translated into college and careers - opportunities made possible because of the Banyan.

Will the sponsored child contact me?

All sponsorships remain anonymous to the students and their families. All sponsored students write a personal thank you to their sponsors, and committee volunteers forward them to the appropriate sponsors. This instills a sense of gratitude and responsibility in the students.

How do I participate in School's Cool?

Sponsorship. Sponsor a specific Banyan child who is attending Risen Christ or DeLaSalle Catholic School. This involves purchasing a backpack, school supplies and uniform items from a list provided to you, or simply send a check for \$300 and the School's Cool committee will do the shopping. Please complete the "School's Cool" Participation Form found on the St. Bart's website under School's Cool, and you will be contacted with your student's information.

Donor. Donate a backpack filled with school supplies for a Banyan child attending public school. Take a tag from the display that will be in the Narthex during the month of July. Backpacks will be accepted at St. Bart's from August 6 - 14.

Donate! All monetary donations made to the School's Cool program are used to purchase supplies for unsponsored children. It is an integral part of this program's success. Checks should be made payable to the Banyan Community and should be mailed in the Banyan Donation Envelopes provided on the "Backpacks for Banyan" display that will be in the Narthex during the month of July, or at the Information Desk.

Drop off all supplies in the Narthex at St. Bart's from August 6 – 14.