

Fortune Society hosts back-to-school book bag give away in time for the start of school



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Children and families from Harlem and surrounding neighborhoods gathered on Saturday at The Fortune Society's supportive housing facility, The Fortune Academy, to receive nearly 1,000 book bags filled with school supplies, thanks to 300 men serving time at Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville, New York. The men—many serving sentences of 25 years to life—donated the bags to The Fortune Society under the auspices of the New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) to help low-income families cut down on back-to-school expenses.

The Green Haven residents raised money for the book bag program through three programs—Project Build, Project for a Calculated Transition (PACT) and Association for Community Teamwork (ACT)—that encourage constructive interactions between inmates and the community. To raise money, participants in the three programs sold items to other inmates within the correctional facility at the facility's commissary.

Hundreds of bags were first distributed to children who visited their incarcerated loved ones at Green Haven. The men then decided to donate the surplus to The Fortune Society, an organization that helps the formerly incarcerated re-integrate into their communities, partly because The Fortune Academy (also known as The Castle) is located in Harlem.

Luis Nunes, an inmate at Green Haven Correctional Facility, said, "We appreciate The Fortune Society's assistance in getting the bags into the hands of children who truly need them."