

By the time this note makes the electronic and print versions of the Community Press, public schools will have begun or will be close to starting. Preparations for the school year bring lots of excitement and a few worries too.

Like several other organizations in the area, our church (Mt. Washington Presbyterian) does a backpack ministry. We load up hundreds of backpacks for children in the area so that preparations of materials can have them ready to learn rather than worrying about one more financial/logistical issue. There are so many handy items in the backpacks that our precious school children will need: tissues, pencils, pens, notebooks, etc..

What's needed in your backpack as you embark on the next adventures in life? Just like the lists the schools provide for back-to-school, it seems like we SHOULD have such a list for ourselves. So...here's the start to my list:

- handkerchief – to capture sweat & tears (hopefully not blood!) shed by me and others;
- coffee cup – without it (filled with a warm caffeinated beverage in the morning) let's just say that the day is a little less bright ☺;
- “smart” phone – it has many nice features, including the camera for recording images for sharing plus reminding me of what captured my attention during the day, for future reference;
- spiral notebook and writing implement – for easily scrawling to-do list items, great ideas shared by others and “aha” moments;
- a smile – what an easy, friendly response to seeing another? (Mother Teresa said "Peace begins with a smile");
- laughter – without it, the day just doesn't seem right (here's a website to help bring some smiles and laughter: <http://www.stevelong.longmemories.info/humor> )

By assuring our backpacks are filled with the right items, we certainly increase the chances for a great start to the adventures ahead. If you're missing some key ingredients, I hope you'll be seeking out the assistance of those in your community, just as our churches and other organizations are helping prepare school children this season.

Enjoy the day...and the memories!

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*Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, is an “aspiring memory missionary.” He and wife Kim are having fun with Long Memories efforts ([www.LongMemories.info](http://www.LongMemories.info)), focusing on helping others in “Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!”*