

About the Event

In August 2021, Sister LaRae Griggs, who served as leader of Youth 4 Christ at St. Stephen's Community Church, brought her vision for a back to school block party to life.

She imagined an event where young people will be able to get their back to school needs met as well as have fun with friends and family. To that end, *Be Inspired! Be Happy! Be Confident!* 1st Annual Back To School Celebration took place on August 14, 2021. The purpose of this event was to provide needed school supplies, connect families to community organizations and businesses, as well as establishing our church as a place of support for students and families in the Groesbeck neighborhood and beyond.

The inaugural event featured vendors from local businesses, community organizations, and a health fair. Participants included The Capital Area District Library, Michigan State Police, Lansing Township Fire Department, and the Ingham County Health Department. Four local businesses participated with booths featuring local products and services and lunch was served. Families were able to play games, win prizes and children were able to play in a bounce house. Most importantly, 100 bags of school supplies were distributed to local area families in time for the new school year and families were able to receive COVID-19 screenings and immunizations.

Sister LaRae Griggs, affectionately known as "Auntie Rae Rae", passed away in November 2021. She was loved and treasured by all and she was a blessing to those who knew her. St. Stephen's Community Church is proud to continue the work LaRae started on the foundation that she built.

In January 2022, Youth 4 Christ was rededicated as *Rae of Sunshine Youth & Young Adult Ministries* in LaRae's memory. We continue to honor LaRae and her work by annually designating the second Saturday of August as St. Stephen's *Rae of Sunshine Day*. This year, on August 13, 2022, St. Stephen's will host *The Rae of Sunshine Back To School Block Party*, our 2nd annual back to school celebration. Further, the former church nursery will be dedicated as the *Sunshine Room*, where youth and young adults can study, learn, meditate and fellowship.

The mission of Rae of Sunshine Youth & Young Adult Ministries is to develop the spiritual well-being of young people under 30 years of age by continuing and building upon the legacy created by Sister LaRae Antoinette Griggs. This mission will be accomplished by nurturing young people's relationship with God and his son Jesus Christ through prayer, study of scripture, community service, and fellowship.

It is our vision to build the next generation of committed disciples to serve God's people.

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