

# BACK2SCHOOL Block Party – Community, the Spirit of Giving Back

(L) Rev Ronald Dodson, Sr. – Faith Community UMC,  
(C) Baltimore City Council President, Brandon Scott,  
(R) 3rd District City Councilman, Ryan Dorsey



On Friday August 23, Faith Community UMC and Eastern UMC sponsored a Back-to-School block party in the church parking lot. After a full day of rain, blue skies appeared in time for the event to begin at 6:30 p.m. – surely a sign of God’s presence.

The event was organized to raise community awareness to the needs of neighborhood children preparing for a new school year. Through their effort, funds were raised to provide back packs filled with school supplies to over 200 children from the Hamilton-Lauraville area plus an additional 60 for children of migrant families in Baltimore City. Beginning in October, youth from both congregations will provide free tutoring to neighborhood children.

The event began with words of prayer and praise from Rev. Ronald Dodson Sr. of Faith Community UMC and Rev. T. Jay Blake of Eastern UMC. 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman Ryan Dorsey and Baltimore City Council President Brandon Scott spoke to the crowd, thanking both congregations for bringing Jesus’s message out of the building and the community.

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Members of both congregations provided games and activities for youth and adults alike, including a bounce house and face painting. Minister Keisha Dukes was the DJ for the evening. Books, clothing and popcorn were

Baltimore City Public School Teacher, Independent Publisher & Back2School Block Party Committee Member, Tuere Ganges with 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman, Ryan Dorsey



Baltimore City Council President, Brandon Scott with Eastern UMC Pastor, Rev Thomas “Jay” Blake

distributed in addition to the backpacks. Area businesses were present including Big Bad Wolf House of Barbeque which sent a food truck with hot dogs, hand cut fries and drinks for only \$1.00. Representatives from community resources were also present including Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street, Clean Water Action, the Baltimore Teachers' Union, the Department of Health and the League of Women Voters who provided voter registration services. The Baltimore Fire Department opened a truck to the Children, and the Aviation Unit of the Baltimore City Police Department did a helicopter demonstration and flyby. Serenity Behavioral Health, LLC owner, Roslyn Fulton, Hamilton Hills Neighborhood Association and HARBEL Community Organization heavily promoted this event through social media, email blasts and made it a part of the monthly HOA meeting agenda. Volunteers wore royal blue t-shirts with the tag line: Unity within the Community. A special thanks our sponsors: First Friday In the City and Baltimore Parish Works.



Rev. Ron Dodson and his wife Donna with their grand daughter

## Unity Within The mmunity



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