

NEWS ARTICLES

NEWS MENU ▾

Record Broken, Needs Met at 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee

Pathfinders break a world record for the most backpacks simultaneously packed in under five minutes.

August 22, 2024 | Gillette, Wyo. | John Simon, with Leisa Morton-Standish



Guinness World Records adjudicator Hannah Ortman speaks to participants during a successful record-setting backpack-stuffing event at the 2024 “Believe the Promise” International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming. Photo: Dawin Rodriguez, North American Division

Pathfinders at the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee spent their week doing what young people typically do: soaking up the summer sun, enjoying delicious multicultural food, spending quality time with thousands of their closest friends, and setting Guinness

World Records—you know, the usual.

On Wednesday, August 7, 255 Pathfinders, leaders, and representatives from around the world came together to achieve one goal: becoming the largest group to ever simultaneously fill backpacks with school supplies in under five minutes. It was as fun as it sounds, though a greater purpose undergirds this unconventional activity.

This brief yet etched-in-perpetuity moment of global fame has set in motion a more extensive effort to provide around 6,200 supplied backpacks to schoolchildren whose families are struggling to afford these necessities. The distribution will be geographically vast, though many backpacks will remain in Gillette, Wyoming, the first-time host of this year's camporee (<http://camporee.org/>).

Nicole Mattson, associate director of education for the Lake Union Conference, played a significant role in organizing this event, which was sponsored by ADRA (<https://adra.org/>), the North American Division Office of Education (<https://adventisteducation.org/>), Adventist Community Services (<https://www.communityservices.org/>), the NAD vice president for evangelism's office, the NAD's union education departments, and renewable energy company Circuit Electric Solar. Mattson considered it a rousing success.

“Kids just love to feel like they've accomplished something great, so having a Guinness World Record title is special. But the bigger picture is that these 6,200 backpacks we're filling with school supplies will be donated to students in need,” said Mattson.

W. Derrick Lea, director of the NAD Adventist Community Services, commented, “We were honored to partner with NAD Education to supply backpacks to the local community and those beyond Gillette. It's been especially exciting to speak with community leaders and individuals who will benefit from this project. ACS sees this initiative as a way to carry out our mission to serve communities in Christ's name.”



The successful backpack-stuffing World Record attempt is a memorable moment for 255 attendees of the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee. Photo: Meraris Medina | North American Division

Circuit Electric Solar cofounder John Brown, also a camporee exhibitor, expressed his excitement at partnering with the NAD Office of Education. “We are honored to have been part of an awesome and record-setting event like the backpack giveaway. Attending the Gillette camporee was the experience of a lifetime.”

Adam Wamack, the ADRA International manager for [Connections](https://www.adraconnections.org/) (<https://www.adraconnections.org/>) mission trips, lauded the project as an early introduction to global missions. “What a privilege it is to bring the Pathfinder young people into this space where we are committed to increasing education access and quality through school supplies to at-risk students all over the world.”

Hannah Ortman, an official Guinness World Records adjudicator, described the steps that led to her witnessing this milestone: “This was a project by the ‘Education Division of the Office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,’ and they were in touch with our company. We have people who work with them to see [if] they want to attempt a record [and] what the event [entails]. I ultimately ended up being the person coming here to adjudicate this record, but it happened through connections with some of the members of the Lake Union and the team here.”



Organizers Nicole Mattson, Lake Union Conference associate director of education, and Ruth Nino, Columbia Union Conference assistant director for elementary education, are pictured holding the official Guinness World Records certificate after a successful attempt to stuff the most backpacks simultaneously. Photo: Cerron Pollard | North American Division

Ortman expressed appreciation for the altruism of this endeavor, indicating it was not a first for Guinness. “We always love to see when someone breaks a record that makes a positive impact in the world. And I know that this attempt specifically is done in order to do something for others. The fact that they’re donating these — it’s part of the record, and it’s also just a testament to the people who are participating and organizing this attempt. It has a larger meaning even than breaking the record. That’s a huge accomplishment in and of itself. ... It’s exciting that they chose that record title where they would do something good for everyone.”

As participants eagerly waited to start under a sizable tent, they grouped primarily in eights, around tables occupied by empty backpacks and loose supplies. When everyone was in place, Ortman communicated the parameters for setting the record. Moments later, she gave the green light, and everyone flew into action. Per Ortman and Guinness protocol, five minutes is the standard for this record, yet the Pathfinders rendered the packs school-ready within 30 seconds. Impressive!

The backpack world record was part of the NAD Office of Education’s overarching camporee presence, with 2019 being its first appearance (<https://www.nadadventist.org/news/swamped-oshkosh>) at an international Pathfinder camporee. Leisa Standish, NAD director of elementary education, reflected on the 2024 initiatives, saying, “Every Pathfinder pledges to live to bless others and treat others as they want to be treated. The International Pathfinder Camporee aims to encourage Pathfinders to follow this pledge. At this camporee, they did so by providing much-needed supplies to underprivileged children and families. At the next camporee? Well, we’ll just have to wait and see.”

— *John Simon, is a freelance writer; additional reporting from Leisa Morton-Standish, North American Division director of Elementary Education.*

MOST POPULAR STORIES

(</news/record-broken-needs-met-2024-international-pathfinder-camporee>) [Record Broken, Needs Met at 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee](/news/record-broken-needs-met-2024-international-pathfinder-camporee) (</news/record-broken-needs-met-2024-international-pathfinder-camporee>).

On Wednesday, August 7, 255 Pathfinders, leaders, and representatives from around the world came together to achieve one goal: becoming the largest group to ever simultaneously fill backpacks with school supplies in under five minutes. It was as fun as it sounds, though a greater purpose undergirds this unconventional activity.

(</news/southern-tidings-hosts-live-stream-show-camporee>) [Southern Tidings Hosts Live-stream Show at Camporee](/news/southern-tidings-hosts-live-stream-show-camporee) (</news/southern-tidings-hosts-live-stream-show-camporee>).

To highlight stories from the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee in an efficient way, the Southern Tidings hosted two live-stream shows on YouTube from Tuesday through Friday (Aug. 6-9) called the “Gillette Breakfast Club.”