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TOWN FOCUS: SOLANA BEACH

## Donated equipment helps youths connect with nature

By **Michelle DeCrescenzo**

COMMUNITY NEWS WRITER

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SOLANA BEACH – Those dusty backpacks and unused sleeping bags in the corners of the closet can take on new life for a good cause.

Adventure 16, a store on Cedros Avenue, collects used gear in good condition for the Donate-A-Pack Foundation. The organization, founded in 1997 by John Mead, president of Adventure 16, funnels donations to nonprofit organizations with programs for disadvantaged youth.

"The backpacks came in handy for our kids," said Kathy Jackson, administrative support specialist for Able-Disabled Advocacy in San Diego.

The advocacy group provides job placement assistance to youths and adults with disabilities.

The youth group used the donated backpacks while attending job fairs to store all the application materials they collected. They also used them to carry lunches on walks around Balboa Park.

The goal of Donate-A-Pack is to provide gear to young people so that they can have wilderness experiences and deepen their personal awareness of the natural environment, according to the group's mission statement.

Nonprofit organizations with programs for disadvantaged children in grade school through high school may submit applications with requests for gear.

"We're not always able to give them everything, but we give them what we can," said Delyth Owen, executive director of Donate-A-Pack.

Owen said the most requested items are tents and sleeping bags. Often a vendor of Adventure 16 will donate gear. Sleeping bags by The North Face and 1,000 daypacks from Gregory Mountain Sports have been donated.

Adventure 16 is at 143 S. Cedros Ave.

For more information about Donate-A-Pack, call (619) 283-2362, ext. 106.

*A town focus on Solana Beach is published each Friday. Do you have a story idea? Contact Michelle DeCrescenzo at [michelle.decrescenzo@uniontrib.com](mailto:michelle.decrescenzo@uniontrib.com) or (760) 476-8221. Material also may be sent by fax to (619) 260-5091, or mailed to The San Diego Union-Tribune, 5130 Avenida Encinas, Carlsbad, CA 92008.*

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