



we give opportunity to our children to succeed, and the essential part of that opportunity is education.”

Diegnan praised the temple and its congregation for supporting students in need in his legislative district, which includes his hometown of South Plainfield and neighboring Edison.

“I cannot congratulate you enough for what you do,” Diegnan said. “This is terrific. We need to celebrate and encourage more of this.”

Upendra Chivukula, a former State Assemblyman and Commissioner of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities who has been instrumental in the annual charity event, said the school supply drive makes a profound impact.

“Today is a special day,” Chivukula said. “Subha Patibandla has done a marvelous job collecting the backpacks. (Having supplies) makes such a difference in a child when they go to school. It brings them smiles when they have a full school bag with all the supplies.”

According to its website, the mission of the Peetham, which Priest Raghu Sankarmanchi founded, is to ensure through its school supply drive that children in need are prepared to learn and succeed.

“Back to school matters to kids,” a message on the Peetham’s website reads. “Having the opportunity to have the same kinds of ... supplies as the other kids matters. Fitting in matters.”

Biral Patel, a member of the Edison Township Board of Education, thanked generous donors for putting “a smile on students’ faces” through the temple’s “massive amount of collections.”

He noted the school supply drive lets students know they have the support of the community.