

## PRESS RELEASE

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**CONTACT:** Valerie Martinez

Juliette Funes

(909) 445-1001

### **Pomona Unified's Successful School Supply Giveaway Provides 1,800 Backpacks to Students**

**POMONA** – Hundreds of Pomona Unified children received complimentary backpacks and school supplies at District Family Support and Resource Center's annual Backpack and School Supply Giveaway on Aug. 5, a week before the start of the school on Aug. 12.

Now celebrating its fourth year, the event provided Pomona Unified families with more than 1,800 free backpacks filled with age-appropriate school materials, including books, pencils, folders and binders.

"With the start of school just around the corner, it is great to see our kids enthusiastic about getting their new backpacks and school supplies and I want to thank the Family Support and Resource Center for bringing this program to them," said Board President Andrew Wong. "Through this event, the District is helping to ensure our students are able to focus on learning and successfully tackling the new school year."

The Family Support and Resource Center supports Pomona Unified students and families with a variety of services and referrals that address mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, health care and housing, as well as emergency basic support referrals and assistance for clothing, food, utilities, furniture/household items or school items.

Originally organized to assist the District's homeless student population, the backpack giveaway event has become a vital resource for Pomona Unified families and students who need school supplies and books for the new school year.

"This is our second year attending and I'm really thankful that this program exists," said Pomona Unified parent Gina Gonzalez, whose son will enter second grade at Arroyo Elementary School. "I most likely would have had to sacrifice some groceries in order to purchase back-to-school materials this year. This event helps everyone in the community."

The popular event has grown over last year when the center distributed 1,300 backpacks, said Patty Azevedo, School Mental Health Services Program Administrator and event organizer.

"It's an amazing program that has helped so many of our families that may not have the means to buy these supplies or learn more about how to access the resources available to them," Azevedo said. "We

are able to serve a large percentage of families thanks to the generous donations and financial sponsorship of our community partners.”

The items were donated by several community groups, including Feed the Children, Christ’s Church of the Valley in San Dimas and School on Wheels, which provides tutoring, school supplies and other educational assistance to children in Southern California.

Resource booths included the District’s Health Services and Child Development departments, the Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Dental Services, and Operation School Bell.

“This event serves as a great reminder that the Pomona community is deeply committed to supporting the learning needs of our students,” said Superintendent Richard Martinez. “By working together to secure donations and share resources, we are able to give all of our students a solid foundation upon which they may build their education.”

For more information about the Family Support and Resource Center, call 909-397-4491, ext. 26501.

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**GIVEAWAY1:** More than 1,800 backpacks were distributed to Pomona Unified families this year as part of the District’s Family Support and Resource Center's annual Backpack and School Supply Giveaway event on Aug. 5.

**GIVEAWAY2:** Pomona Unified children line up to receive age-appropriate school materials, including books, pencils, folders and binders during the District’s Family Support and Resource Center's annual Backpack and School Supply Giveaway event on Aug. 5.

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