

Denver Public Schools

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School Supply Donations Fill Hundreds of Backpacks for DPS Homeless Students

Denver -- With the first day of school just around the corner, the DPS School Partners Program and the Minority Enterprise & Educational Development (MEED) are kicking off the school year with the 8th annual Backpacks for Homeless Students. Backpacks are filled with school supplies donated from community members and local businesses and will be given to hundreds of homeless students who are in need of basic necessities such as backpacks, pencils and notebooks. Without the backpack donations, many students carry all of their belongings in grocery sacks, which they carry like a backpack.

"This program helps to provide the essential supplies that homeless students need in order to be prepared to attend school," said Anna Stout, South Area Homeless Liaison for the Educational Outreach Program of DPS. "We know when our students have the items needed to attend school attendance increases, and they are more dedicated to academic success."

The Backpacks for Homeless Students campaign helps to aid over 1,500 homeless students in Denver Public Schools. Last year, more than 1,567 students benefited from the backpack and supply donations. Of the 78,352 students in DPS, over 55,198 took advantage of free and reduced school lunch during school year 2009-2010.

"These tremendous donations are needed now more than ever," said DPS Superintendent Tom Boasberg. "Our students benefit greatly from the generous donations the community has given to us."

The number of homeless students in Colorado rose from 12,302 in the 2007—2008 school year to 15,800 in 2008—2009.

This year, several businesses, including Newmont Mining Corporation and Elitch Gardens, have made huge efforts to contribute to this high-needs program.

Employees with Newmont Mining Corporation donated 515 backpacks filled with supplies, while Elitch Gardens launched a school supply drive to benefit the campaign. Visitors who donate school supplies at Elitch Gardens the week of Aug. 2 will pay the kids price for admission to the park. All donations will benefit DPS Backpacks for Homeless Students.

“This will be a banner year for our backpack program. Thanks to the increase of wonderful donations from our local businesses, our program has been able to reach out to more homeless students and families,” said MEED Executive Director Sara Fuentes.

About Minority Enterprise & Educational Development, Inc., (MEED)

MEED collects new and gently used backpacks, and school supplies to distribute to these homeless students, in the fall. We need your assistance in our effort to help these children. If you would like to help, please bring backpacks and/or school supplies to one of these drop sites:

MEED	Denver Public Schools
Sara Fuentes	Sharon Gonzales
3405 Gilpin St.	1350 E. 33rd Ave.
Denver CO 80205	Denver, CO 80205

Or call MEED at 303-296-2969 to have your items picked up.

Please contact the DPS Communications Office at 720-423-3414 for more information on the Backpacks for DPS Homeless Students.

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