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**OFFICE DEPOT FOUNDATION TO DONATE TWO MILLIONTH BACKPACK;
HELPS TO GIVE CHILDREN HOPE, CONFIDENCE AND TOOLS FOR SUCCESS**

Donations to Come in All 50 States, Canada, Native American Reservations and Elsewhere

Boca Raton, Fla. – While most children eagerly anticipate the start of the school year, it can also be a source of great worry for families that can't afford to buy backpacks for their kids. Since 2001, the [Office Depot Foundation](#) has helped to ease these concerns by donating new backpacks to children in the United States, Canada and beyond. This year, the Foundation will mark an extraordinary milestone when it donates its *two millionth backpack*.

While the scale of the Office Depot Foundation National Backpack Program is global, it makes a difference on an individual level for every child it reaches. "We have thousands of clients who can't afford book bags and end up bringing their school supplies in a plastic grocery bag," says Mark Tisdahl, In-Kind Manager and Group Volunteer Coordinator for the Jane Addams Hull House Association in Chicago. "The plastic grocery bag is ineffective in carrying school supplies and books, but it is also humiliating. Due to these generous donations, we have been able to end the humiliation of hundreds of students scared to go to school without a backpack."

In 2009, the Office Depot Foundation – the independent foundation serving as the primary charitable giving arm of Office Depot (NYSE: ODP) – will donate approximately 300,000 backpacks containing essential school supplies to deserving children. "The Foundation believes strongly that we are helping children to build self-confidence, boost self-esteem and achieve greater success in the classroom – all as a result of being well-prepared for school," states Foundation President Mary Wong. "We are extremely pleased to be able to donate our two millionth backpack at a time when so many children and families are dealing with the impact of the economic downturn."

Marguerite W. Kondracke, president and CEO of America's Promise Alliance in Washington, D.C., observes, "These backpacks are more than just school supplies. They are a symbol of hope. When nearly one in three public school students drops out before graduating, we know we must do more to help our children succeed."

With a new backpack, children "are able to come to school on equal footing with other students and concentrate on their studies rather than feeling that they have less than others," says Margaret Bagley, executive director of Communities In Schools of Palm Beach County in West



Palm Beach, Fla. Adds Cathey Brown, executive director of Rainbow Days in Dallas, “It’s not just the backpacks or the supplies they are getting, it’s the sense of purpose and self-esteem that we’re striving to build.”

The Office Depot Foundation backpacks are designed with kids in mind. They come in five different color combinations and are sturdy and functional, with two large front pockets and wide, padded straps for comfort and support. Each backpack includes a pouch containing essential back-to-school items – crayons, a ruler, a glue stick, a pen, a pencil, a pencil sharpener and an eraser. They do not carry permanent Office Depot or Office Depot Foundation branding.

To distribute the backpacks, the Foundation is hosting 25 “Celebration of Success” events in cities across the United States and Canada. For the second consecutive year, backpack donations will be made to children of the Navajo Nation in Arizona and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. Five of the events will feature appearances by Tony Stewart, driver of the No. 14 Office Depot®/Old Spice Chevy Impala SS in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series.

Thousands of backpacks also are being donated by Office Depot stores in hundreds of local communities and in collaboration with the Office Depot Business Solutions Division in selected cities. Thousands more will be distributed through the Office Depot Foundation’s partnerships with several national non-profit organizations – including the Tony Stewart Foundation, the National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association, City Year, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), Feed The Children, the Kids In Need Foundation, Nourish America and the National Foundation for Women Legislators, whose members will give backpacks to children in all 50 states.

Mary Wong, the Foundation’s president, notes, “The National Backpack Program is one of the key ways in which we seek to accomplish our mission – Listen Learn Care® – and to achieve our strategic priority of helping children get ready for life and work. Parents and teachers alike tell us how vitally important these backpacks are to the children who receive them. We are proud to know that this program is making such a profound difference.”

About the Office Depot Foundation

The Office Depot Foundation is an independent foundation (tax exempt under IRC Sec. 501(c)(3)) that serves as the independent charitable giving arm of Office Depot, Inc. In keeping with its mission, Listen Learn Care®, the Foundation supports a variety of programs that help children succeed in school and in life; enable civil society (non-profit) organizations to become more efficient and effective; help people and businesses prepare for disasters, then recover and rebuild afterwards; strengthen local communities through grants, product donations and volunteerism; and encourage community development through entrepreneurship and economic innovation. For more information, visit www.officedepotfoundation.org.

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