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Note to media: These backpacks are not available to the general public. The backpacks are being donated only to the school districts named below.

**OFFICE DEPOT FOUNDATION SUPPORTS ELKHART, IND., RECOVERY;
DONATES 1,850 BACKPACKS TO HELP CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL**

2009 National Backpack Program Celebrates 2 Millionth Backpack Milestone

Elkhart, Ind., July 27, 2009 – In support of the continuing economic stimulus efforts in Elkhart, the [Office Depot Foundation](#) announced today that it will donate 1,850 backpacks to three area school districts to help children succeed in the classroom during the new school year.

The backpacks will be donated to Elkhart Community Schools, Concord Community Schools and Baugo Community Schools during a special “Back-to-School Backpack Celebration” beginning at 10 a.m. on Friday, July 31, at the Feed The Children distribution center located at 1127 Miles Ave. in Elkhart. The event is being presented in collaboration with the Education Council of the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce and Feed The Children.

“An investment in education is an investment in the future,” notes Mary Wong, president of the independent foundation that serves as the primary charitable giving arm of Office Depot (NYSE: ODP). “The Office Depot 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.”

Included in the donation to the Elkhart District are 1,000 backpacks for use during the upcoming Back 2 School Unity Festival on Aug. 15. A group of children from the Growing Kids Learning Center in Elkhart also will receive backpacks.

“We are very pleased to be able to donate these backpacks in Elkhart – and elsewhere across the United States and Canada – at a time when so many children and families are dealing with the impact of the economic downturn,” adds Wong, who will participate in the event. The Foundation will announce a similar backpack donation in August in Fort Myers, Fla., which – like Elkhart – was visited by President Barack Obama in February after he signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law.

Special guests scheduled to attend the July 31 ceremony include:

- Elkhart Mayor Dick Moore
- Rod Roberson, City of Elkhart Council President
- Brian Thomas, City of Elkhart Councilman



- Peter Gehred, Field Representative, U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly
- Carlin Yoder, Indiana State Senator, District 12
- Philip Penn, President, Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce
- Dan Oakley, President, Chase Bank, and Chairman, Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce
- Members of the Elkhart Chamber's Board of Directors and Education Council
- Erin Carlstrom, Director of Education, Feed The Children

School representatives are scheduled to include:

- **Elkhart Community Schools** – Dr. John Hill, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Chair of the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Education Council
- **Concord Community Schools** – Wayne Stubbs, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum/Instruction, and member of the Education Council
- **Baugo Community Schools** – Scott Kovatch, Principal, Jimtown Intermediate School; Mike Stout, Principal, Jimtown South Elementary; and Jeff Deak, Teacher, Jimtown North Elementary

"Economic recovery takes place on many levels," says Philip Penn, the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce President. "By donating more than 1,800 backpacks to our local Elkhart schools, the Office Depot Foundation is supporting children, their families and, ultimately, our entire community. We greatly appreciate the Foundation's commitment to making a difference here in Elkhart."

The backpack donations in Elkhart are part of the Office Depot Foundation's National Backpack Program, which is marking an extraordinary milestone this year by donating its *two millionth backpack* since the program's inception in 2001. To distribute the backpacks, the Foundation is hosting 25 "Back-to-School Backpack Celebrations" in cities across the United States and Canada – five of which feature special appearances by Tony Stewart, driver of the No. 14 Office Depot®/Old Spice Chevrolet 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 are being distributed through the Foundation's partnerships with eight 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. 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.

To learn more about the Office Depot Foundation National Backpack Program, please visit www.officedepotfoundation.org or the [Two Million Backpacks](#) page on Facebook.

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. To learn more, visit www.officedepotfoundation.org.

