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

**OFFICE DEPOT FOUNDATION HELPS KIDS SUCCEED IN SCHOOL  
BY DONATING 11,000+ BACKPACKS IN NEW ORLEANS AND STATEWIDE**

*Nearly 1.8 Million New Backpacks Donated Since 2001*

**New Orleans, La, October 24, 2008** – For the second year in a row, the Office Depot Foundation – the independent foundation serving as the primary charitable giving arm of Office Depot (NYSE: ODP) – is donating thousands of backpacks to deserving children in New Orleans and around the state of Louisiana to help them succeed during the school year.

The Foundation will announce the donation of 11,100 backpacks during a “Backpack Donation Day” event on Monday, October 27, 2008, at 3:00 p.m. The event will take place at the Office Depot store located at 3526 Veterans Memorial Highway in Metairie.

These donations are among a total of 300,000 backpacks being provided to scores of non-profit organizations and schools across the U.S. and Canada through the 2008 Office Depot Foundation National Backpack Program. The recipients, in turn, give the backpacks to children they serve in classrooms and social service programs. In the eight years of this program, Office Depot has donated nearly 1.8 million backpacks.

During the New Orleans event, backpacks will be donated to the following designated recipients:

- Recovery School District and Recovery School District Charters
- St. Bernard Parish School District
- St. Tammany Parish School District
- 18 High Performance/High Poverty (HHP) Schools designated by the Louisiana Department of Education
- Cameron Parish School District (in southwest Louisiana)

Special guests scheduled to participate in the presentation ceremony include:

- Paul G. Pastorek, State Superintendent of Education
- Maura W. Donahue, Vice President of Business Development, DonahueFavret Contractors, Inc. and President, DonahueFavret Contractors Holding Company

- State Senator Jack Donahue
- Dellona Davis, Executive Director, CASA New Orleans
- Jason Humbles, Storehouse Manager, World Vision, Inc., representing the Kids In Need Foundation
- Shayla Moon, Recruitment Manager, City Year New Orleans
- Kira Orange Jones, Executive Director, Teach For America of Greater New Orleans
- Glenn Hayes, President and CEO, Jefferson Chamber of Commerce
- Vincent Nzinga, Director of Schools and Community Relations, Recovery School District and Recovery School District Charters
- Denise M. Cooper, Curriculum Coordinator, St. Bernard Parish School District
- Dennis Sharp, Curriculum and Instruction Supervisor, St. Tammany Parish School District
- Alicia Mitchell, Teacher, Carver Elementary, Monroe City School District

"On behalf of the students and educators in Louisiana, I would like to extend our gratitude to the Office Depot Foundation for this generous donation," State Superintendent Pastorek said. "The gift of a brand new backpack and essential school supplies will undoubtedly put a smile on the faces of children and their families and help them achieve success this school year. With the active support of Office Depot and other community and business partners, our students and schools can continue to improve."

Backpack recipients from previous years note that these donations make a significant impact.

"We're dealing with children from families with some of the highest needs in the country," said Michael Hagen, Deputy Superintendent of School Management for the Recovery School District, which received enough backpacks in 2007 for every child in grades Pre-K through 5 to go to school that September with a new backpack. "What the Office Depot Foundation committed to doing was making sure that those children were ready for learning on that first day. It was phenomenal."

Office Depot Foundation President Mary Wong says this is precisely the point of the National Backpack Program.

"By placing backpacks containing essential school supplies into the hands of children, we are giving them important tools they need to start school with confidence – and to succeed throughout the year," says Mary Wong, president of the Office Depot Foundation. "The National Backpack Program is one of the key ways in which we seek to accomplish the Foundation's mission – Listen Learn Care™ – and to achieve our strategic priority of helping children get ready for life and work."

To distribute the backpacks this year, the Foundation hosted 25 "Backpack Donation Day" events across the United States and Canada. For the first time this year, backpack donations were made to children of the Navajo Nation in Arizona and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota.

Thousands of backpacks also were donated by Office Depot stores in hundreds of local communities and in collaboration with the Office Depot Business Solutions Division in several additional cities. Thousands have been distributed through the Office Depot Foundation's partnerships with eight national non-profit organizations – including the

National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association, City Year, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, Feed The Children, the Kids In Need Foundation, Nourish America, Teach for America and the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL). In another first for the program, NFWL members in all 50 states donated backpacks to children in their districts and communities.

The 2008 backpacks come in five different color schemes, blending orange, blue, red, purple, green and – for the first time – pink. Designed primarily to meet the needs of students in grades K-5, the backpacks feature two front pockets and wide, padded straps for comfort and support. Each backpack contains a pencil pouch containing essential back-to-school items – a ruler, four crayons, a glue stick, a pen, a pencil, a pencil sharpener and an eraser.

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### **Fun Facts about the 2008 Office Depot Foundation National Backpack Program**

- If the nearly 1.8 million backpacks donated since the inception of the program in 2001 were stacked on top of each other, they would be taller than 267 Washington Monuments!
- If all 300,000 Office Depot Foundation backpacks were placed end-to-end, they would cover a distance of 80.5 miles.
- The 300,000 backpacks fill 12,000 boxes weighing 372,000 pounds – the approximate weight of 31 African elephants.
- The backpacks contain enough crayons for every resident of Vermont *and* the District of Columbia.
- If every child who receives a backpack from the Office Depot Foundation in 2008 came together at one time to watch a professional football game, they would fill nearly every seat in Lambeau Field, the Louisiana Superdome, Soldier Field in Chicago, Dolphin Stadium and Fawcett Stadium at the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

### **About the Office Depot Foundation**

The Office Depot Foundation is an independent foundation that serves as the primary charitable giving arm of Office Depot. In keeping with its mission, Listen Learn Care™, the Foundation strives to make a positive impact on many lives in many communities around the world. The Foundation supports a variety of programs that enhance the quality of life for children, strengthen communities, encourage local and global economic growth, and empower schools and non-profit organizations. It also provides support when disasters strike – doing what it can not only to speed the process of rebuilding, but also to mitigate the impact of future disasters. For more information about the Office Depot Foundation, visit [www.officedepotfoundation.org](http://www.officedepotfoundation.org).

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