

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

United Way
of Fort Smith Area



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Stuff the Bus July 27 and 28 with school supplies

- Ensuring Children Succeed
- Building Adult Independence
- Building Strong Communities

(July 18, FORT SMITH, AR) — Many children look forward to arriving on the first day of school with new notebooks, backpacks and pencil boxes, but it's a different story for children whose families can't afford these items. On July 27-28, United Way of Fort Smith Area is asking you to help them stuff a bus full of supplies to be donated to at-risk children in the six-county area it serves. Donations of new school supplies will be accepted at area Wal-Mart stores and other locations. Look for the school bus.

If everyone could pick up some of the items listed on the school supply list on their way to the checkout and drop it by the bus, it would make a huge difference to needy kids when classes begin. Volunteers will be staffing the buses to assist patrons who wish to donate supplies. A complete list of suggested items can be picked up at the each site.

In 2006, more than 20,000 packages of new school supplies were collected at 15 locations. The donated items were given to 23 school districts and partner agencies. Not only do the donated supplies help children with their studies, having a new backpack or notebook can really help raise a child's self-esteem. Feeling good about themselves and having the tools they need to complete their schoolwork really helps children get off on the right foot as they start a new school year.

"Our teachers inform counselors who are responsible for coordinating the confidential distribution of items to eligible students in our school," said Jim Loyd, Paris School Superintendent. "Won't you help 'Stuff the Bus' to give a child a fresh start this school year?"

A school bus will be located at the Paris Wal-Mart on July 27 from 12 p.m. – 9 p.m. and July 28 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

For more information, contact Sarah Fowler, Resource Development Director Outlying Area, at 479-782-1311 or sarah.fowler@unitedway.org.

The United Way of Fort Smith Area, Inc. serves Crawford, Franklin, Logan and Sebastian counties in Arkansas and LeFlore and Sequoyah counties in Oklahoma. Through a single community-wide campaign, volunteers raise funds that are allocated to 33 health and human service member agencies. Volunteer assessments determine how to distribute funds so that the money is serving the most pressing community issues and reaching the people who are most in need.