

# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## United Way's "Kickoff to Caring" Provides 5,000 Backpacks for Students

[TOLEDO, Ohio] – United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) will host its fourth annual "Kickoff to Caring" on August 7, bringing together over 1,000 community volunteers to fill 5,000 backpacks for local students.

"Events like Kickoff to Caring really showcase United Way's role in the community – convening folks to make a real, visible impact for those in need," said Wendy Pestrue, president & CEO of UWGT.

Historically, UWGT's backpack build took place at the Huntington Center in Downtown Toledo. This year, it will be occurring at Owens Community College in Perrysburg within their Student Health and Activities Center from 8:00-9:30 a.m.

"Each backpack will be filled with essential school materials, like pencils, notebooks, folders and crayons," said Pestrue. "The bag and all the supplies are valued at \$80-\$90, and to be able to provide such expensive items to a child or family, at no cost, relieves a very heavy financial burden," she stated.

After the event, the 5,000 bags will be distributed to key community partners. The largest allocation will be delivered to Toledo Public Schools (TPS) to specifically serve the near 3,000 students who are considered homeless. A portion of those bags will also assist children enrolled in TPS who are in foster care.

The remaining bags will go to The Salvation Army, students in Wood and Ottawa County, and the Area Office on Aging's "Kinship Program," which provides backpacks to children who are currently being cared for by a grandparent.

"We are asking that volunteers consider giving \$15 when registering for the event online. That's about the cost for United Way to purchase each bag, full of supplies, given our generous donors and substantial backpack order," said Pestrue.

If local families with school age children would like to see if they qualify for a free backpack, they are encouraged to call 2-1-1, which is UWGT's free, 24/7, 365-day health and human service helpline.

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