

# Disney Helps Local Students Start School with Essentials

## Cast Members Give More Than 2.1 Million School Supplies

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., (Aug. 18, 2011) – Giving local students the tools they need to start the school year with confidence, Walt Disney World Cast Members collected a record 2.1 million school supplies during their annual back-to-school supply drive. The donations, ranging from pencils to notebook paper, will benefit thousands of Central Florida families in need.

“While school supplies may seem simple, they are essential for success in the classroom,” says Nancy Gidusko, director of Community Relations for Walt Disney World Resort. “I’m so proud of our Disney Cast Members who recognize this need and generously give back-to-school basics. By doing so, they are making a substantial difference in the lives of thousands of young students in Orange and Osceola counties.”

During the past week, Disney VoluntEARS distributed nearly 14,000 backpacks filled with 1,810,000 million school supplies to 19 schools and community centers throughout Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Polk and Lake counties.

The remaining 377,815 school supplies were given to A Gift For Teaching’s free store so that local teachers can put them to use in their classrooms.

The back-to-school supply drive is one of many ways that Walt Disney World Resort actively supports education as part of its commitment toward building a better future for Central Florida’s children. Other examples include:

- In May 2011, public school districts and early learning coalitions in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake and Polk counties received a combined total of \$290,000 in Disney Helping Kids Shine Grants to enhance student performance.
- Disney is the primary sponsor of the A Gift For Music, a program that provides free music lessons to more than 250 students who normally could not afford them.
- In 2010, Disney VoluntEARS helped Central Florida public schools by giving 16,949 hours toward activities ranging from serving on Parent/Teacher Association boards to assisting teachers in the classroom.
- To date, more than 11,500 students have been named Disney Dreamers and Doers. The program recognizes exceptional students throughout Central Florida for demonstrating outstanding character and volunteer service.