

Disney Cast Members Donate Record 3.1 Million School Supplies, 13,000 Backpacks to Central Florida Students

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., Aug. 9, 2012 – School superintendents from Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake and Polk counties today joined Disney VoluntEARS and Mickey Mouse to celebrate a record 3.1 million supplies and 13,000 backpacks that are on the way to students across Central Florida.

The supplies, all donated by Disney Cast Members and Walt Disney World Resort, were collected during the annual Back-to-School Supply Drive. The initiative is part of Disney's long-standing tradition of supporting school children in Central Florida from early learning through college.

"With the Back-to-School drive, our mission is to help set students up for success, even if it is one pencil at a time," said Nancy Gidusko, director of community relations for Walt Disney World Resort. "We not only want to make a difference for the students, but also inspire others to support and nurture the children who are the future of our community."

Orange County Superintendent Dr. Barbara Jenkins, Osceola County Superintendent Melba Luciano, Lake County Superintendent Dr. Susan Moxley, Seminole County Superintendent Walt Griffin and Polk County Superintendent Dr. Sherrie B. Nickell all were on hand to accept the donations and ring a bell celebrating the start of the upcoming school year.

In addition to the Back-to-School drive, Disney supports education through several other efforts including:

- Financial support – such as annual contributions to local school districts and grants to Early Learning Coalition centers and other non-profits that focus on education (e.g., A Gift for Teaching, STARS and Junior Achievement);
- Individual recognition – achievement in academics and community service are recognized through the Disney Dreamers and Doers program; and
- Expertise – every day, Cast Members share their expertise and knowledge in classrooms all over Central Florida; last year alone they volunteered 14,622 hours in local schools.