



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Foster Child Backpack Drive receives support from the Superior Court
Special delivery arrives August 1

MONTEREY PARK – Hundreds of backpacks and tote bags destined for foster children in need will be delivered Monday to the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court through a combined effort of judges of the Los Angeles Superior Court, Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, and Barristers organizations of the Los Angeles County Bar Assn.

Many judges and commissioners responded to the request to support the Barristers Foster Child backpack drive by collecting new backpacks and other small travel bags to donate to the Children's Law Center. The drive will continue through August.

The delivery is set to occur Monday morning as a special Superior Court truck moves hundreds of backpacks from the Superior Court to the Children's Court headquarters in Monterey Park, where the Children's Law Center is located.

Assistant Presiding Judge J. Stephen Czulegar and Children's Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash will welcome the truck as it arrives and make the presentation to Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of the Children's Law Center. Also attending will be Stuart A. Forsyth, executive director of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and current President of the Barristers, Kim Tung, Esq. and last year's President Luci Chen, Esq.

Throughout California, nearly 100 children are placed in foster care each day. As the nonpartisan Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care pointed out, no child enters or leaves foster care except by order of a judge. The Commission issued a report last year noting the critical role of the court and recommending strengthened court oversight of the child welfare system.

The Los Angeles Superior Court, alone, handles more than 30,000 abused and neglected foster youth cases each year. The children in the foster care system are moved from one placement to another, on average, four times each during their stay in the system.

"Foster children come through the court system by no fault of their own. This is one stop that can positively effect a child's life. Receiving expressions of care can be beneficial during their experience at the court," said Judge Nash. "We thank the judges and attorneys who donated these backpacks and hope they will give children a sense that there are people who know they are special and care about them."

Too often, foster children shifted from one placement to another find themselves putting their clothing and belongings in garbage bags as they prepare to move. Unfortunately, the message these children often get is that they are throw-a-ways. As a result today's troubled foster youth may become tomorrow's troubled adults. More than

half will be unemployed; almost a third will become homeless, and one in five will be incarcerated within two years of leaving foster care.

“Children living in foster care often possess a resilience and indomitable spirit that serve them well, despite the worst that life has thrown their way. But they also need to know that someone cares,” said Children’s Law Center Executive Director Miriam Krinsky. “We are grateful to the judges and attorneys in Los Angeles who have demonstrated their care today by donating these wonderful school backpacks, items many children consider necessities, but that are often out of reach for foster youth.”

The backpack drive helps provide these children with something they can keep permanently to carry some of their valuable personal possessions as they pack and repack. Each child will receive a pack or tote filled with new school supplies to start the school year. Without the sense of stability, security or family in their lives, school can be a place to make friends and find a sense of belonging.

The Superior Court judicial participation has resulted in the acquisition of hundreds of backpacks, totes and school supplies. Several bench officers have enlisted retailers and corporations, which also responded with generous donations. The enthusiastic participation has resulted in the extension of the June deadline for accepting donations and the drive will result in more children receiving gifts than ever before.

“LACBA Barristers (Young Lawyers) organized this backpack drive with other bar associations and with the support from the Superior Court to show that lawyers care about foster children,” said Barristers member Eric Cioffi, “LACBA Barristers arranged for drop sites throughout the community and asked the Courts to support them in this endeavor. The first Barristers Foster Child Backpack Drive was started by Barristers Executive Committee Member”

Many of the participating Judges and Commissioners donated items anonymously. Commissioner Timothy Murphy and Judge Fumiko Hachiya Wasserman brought in a combined total of nearly 300 backpacks.

The LACBA Affiliates participating in the Backpack Drive are:

Black Women's Lawyers Association
Mexican-American Bar Association
Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles
Beverly Hills Bar Association
John M. Langston Bar Association
Japanese-American Bar Association
Korean-American Bar Association
Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association
Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association