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HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY, BARBARA BUSH HOUSTON LITERACY FOUNDATION AND PARTNERS PREPARE STUDENTS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

HOUSTON— The Houston Housing Authority teamed up with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation (BBHLF), Houston Public Library (HPL) and its partners Schlumberger, Jack and Jill of America, Inc., Houston Independent School District, and KBXX 97.9FM to host its Family Back-To-School Fair at Cuney Homes—an affordable housing community. An estimated 225 children received literacy supplies. The festive environment included music, crafts, a gaming truck, a tumbling bus and free food for families.

“We want to send our residents back to school with all the tools that they need to have a successful school year, and it’s great that we have wonderful community partners who will work with us to make it happen,” said Houston Housing Authority President & CEO Tory Gunsolley. “We’re not just in the business of providing quality, affordable homes but also changing lives. Providing our young residents with the resources that they need to excel in their classes is a step towards a brighter future.”

The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation donated more than 200 gently used books, journals, T-shirts, school supplies and backpacks.

“Providing children with the necessary literacy resources is one of the many ways that we can help break the cycle of low literacy within families,” explained Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation President, Dr. Julie Baker Finck. “Without access to age-appropriate reading materials and school supplies, children are already behind when they start the school year. Everyone deserves an opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential in life, and we are proud to play a role in making this happen.”

The Houston Public Library had its Mobile Express bus on-site and Pop Up Library sessions, which provided residents with a Pop Up backpack that held free items including a free book, an activity sheet, and passes to the Children’s Museum of Houston. In addition, residents had the opportunity to stop by HPL’s table to learn more about library services and local programs at nearby Smith Neighborhood Library and Young Neighborhood Library. The Cozy Reading Corner, an area for children to be read aloud to, was sponsored by Westco.

Support for this project was also provided by Paula Harris an HISD Trustee for the Cuney Homes area, Chair of the Jack and Jill of America, Inc. and a leader at Schlumberger. Jack and Jill of America, Inc. and Schlumberger each donated 200 books.

“Literacy is such an important topic and where we as a community should coordinate and focus many of our efforts,” Harris said. “Making sure that children have access to books is very important to Schlumberger and that's why we have partnered with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation on their efforts with the literacy blueprint. These initiatives call for “all hands on deck” to ensure Houston-area children are reading on or above grade level. Also, Jack and Jill of America, Inc. is extremely proud of our teens who volunteered for the Back-To-School Fair with the Houston Housing Authority. I am excited to see partnerships form around literacy initiatives.”

ABOUT HHA:

The Houston Housing Authority provides affordable homes and services to more than 58,000 low-income Houstonians, including over 17,000 families housed through the Housing Choice Voucher Program and another 5,700 living in 25 public housing and tax credit developments around the city. HHA also administers the nation’s third largest voucher program exclusively serving homeless veterans. More information about the Houston Housing Authority can be found at www.housingforhouston.com.

ABOUT BBHLF:

The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, co-chaired by Neil and Maria Bush, was established as a charitable organization focused on improving the quality of life for Houston residents through the power of literacy. The Foundation advocates for literacy as a fundamental right of everyone and a foundational skill towards success in life. It is founded on the belief held by Barbara Bush, former First Lady, “If you help a person to read, then their opportunities in life will be endless.” In 2013, The Bush Family created the Houston-based foundation separate from the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, a national foundation, in response to the need to deepen the awareness of and intensify services and support for the nation’s fourth largest and most diverse city – Houston.





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