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Press Release

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****2 PHOTOS ATTACHED****

Organization Delivers 18,094 Pounds of Goods for Homeless Students

Baton Rouge, LA – A giant tractor-trailer rig pulled up at the Living Faith Christian Center Wednesday morning, February 18. Inside it was 18,094 pounds worth of food, toiletries, backpacks, school supplies and books donated by the national Feed the Children organization to assist homeless students enrolled in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS).

When the trailer doors opened, there were plenty of volunteers waiting to help unload and load the boxes and boxes of goods, **including 3,844 books and backpacks filled with school supplies. Volunteers from Aramark, the Lambda Alpha Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the U.S. Army Baton Rouge Recruiting Company, including Sgt. Charlie Burks (*first photo*), lined up to move boxes from the trailer to the trucks and cars of those collecting for schools and service organizations.**

Those organizations serving the homeless student population include Winbourne Elementary School, the Zachary Police Department, the Community Association for the Welfare of School Children, homeless shelters and many others.

Nearby, Winbourne Elementary is one of the EBRPSS schools with a heavy concentration of homeless students. Generally, in this school district, Winbourne Elementary, Broadmoor Elementary, Delmont Elementary, Capital High and Scotlandville Magnet High schools have the highest concentrations of homeless students -- among others, mostly in the inner city -- according to Carolyn Coleman, Homeless coordinator for the School System's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (*second photo, second from right, with Mjr. Dion Freeman, Feed the Children driver Derek Burdett and Terance Vessel of Omega Psi Phi*).

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Homeless Students' Delivery/2

In the school district, there are a total of about 1,557 homeless students enrolled in public schools. Many are emancipated youth living on their own as a head of household and going to school while possibly working a job, too. That type of homeless student is on the rise, Coleman said.

A homeless student is defined as one who does not have a fixed or adequate night-time residence and/or are awaiting foster home placement. Inadequate might be defined as having no water, having no electricity, having no bed, living in a car, living in a motel, living on the street, tripling or doubling up on living space, living in a shelter, etc.

There is a homeless contact at each EBRPSS school as designated by the principal. Those individuals help identify these students and work with agencies and shelters to find them housing, retrieve their educational records, assist them in enrollment, assist them with after-school tutoring (either at a school or a shelter), give them transportation to school and more. Coleman said it is getting more difficult to find shelter or housing-assisted apartments for homeless students due to the influx of people from the recent hurricanes.

Once identified as a homeless student, the student can choose to either stay in his school of origin for the rest of the school year or attend the school in his new residence's zoning area.

For more information, call Coleman at (225) 226-3445 or (225) 268-7392.

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