

N.C. Homeless Education Program Distributes Food, School Supplies Oct. 30

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GREENSBORO, N.C. — The [SERVE Center](#) at UNCG will help deliver more than 2,800 backpacks filled with food, books and other supplies to school social workers at noon Friday, Oct. 30, in Pinehurst.

The [N.C. Homeless Education Program](#) at SERVE is overseeing distribution of the donation from [Feed The Children](#), an international relief organization based in Oklahoma City.

The materials will be provided to the 250 attendees of the annual conference of the [N.C. School Social Workers Association](#) at the Carolina Hotel, 1 Carolina Vista Dr., in Pinehurst. When they return to their school districts, the social workers will give the backpacks to the state's neediest students.

An additional 500 backpacks from Feed The Children will be delivered to the SERVE Center at the North Campus of [Gateway University Research Park](#). They will be available for school districts without a social worker at the Pinehurst conference and school districts that have an emergency, such as the 2006 fire at Guilford County's Eastern High School.

Almost 17,000 North Carolina school children were identified as homeless during the 2007-08 school year. Although a report hasn't been finalized, it appears that number grew to about 18,000 last year, says Lisa Phillips, state coordinator of the N.C. Homeless Education Program.

"It's amazing what children and youth go through when they don't have stable housing," Phillips says. "They sometimes come to school late, are absent, lack the necessary school supplies and often attend school hungry."

"At the same time, it's remarkable to see them come to school each day and what they're able to do when their basic needs are met. That's why these backpacks are so important."

The N.C. Homeless Education Program is dedicated to ensuring that all homeless children and youths have access to public education. It has been operated by the SERVE Center at UNCG with funding from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction since January 2009.

The SERVE Center also runs the [National Center for Homeless Education](#), the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for homeless education.

Founded in 1979 by Larry and Frances Jones, Feed The Children is consistently ranked as one of the 10 largest international charities in the U.S., based on private, non-government support. The Christian relief organization delivers food, medicine, clothing and other necessities to individuals, children and families who lack these essentials due to famine, war, poverty or natural disaster.

In fiscal year 2008, the nonprofit distributed more than 133 million pounds of food and other essentials to children and their families in all 50 states and other countries, supplementing more than 760,000 meals each day. It distributed 100,000 backpacks across the nation during the 2008-09 school year and plans to distribute 120,000 this year.

Since its founding, the organization has helped those in need in 118 countries around the globe.