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**OFFICE DEPOT FOUNDATION DONATES 3,000 BACKPACKS TO ELKHART, IND.,
'BACK-2-SCHOOL' DRIVE; HOSTS 'COMMUNITY CONVERSATION'
FOR NON-PROFIT, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS**

ELKHART, Ind., August 13, 2010 – Just over a year ago, the Office Depot Foundation came to Elkhart to donate 1,800 backpacks to children in this Northern Indiana community, which had been buffeted by the economic downturn and was struggling with double-digit unemployment.

The visit led to the establishment of a strong partnership with Back-2-School Elkhart, a non-profit organization that coordinates a communitywide initiative to provide school supplies, clothing and other necessities to children in need before the new school year begins.

Now, the Office Depot Foundation is back in Elkhart to donate 3,000 backpacks to area children during Back-2-School Elkhart's August 14 event at Historic Roosevelt Center and Park. The donations are part of the Foundation's National Backpack Program, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary and has given away more than 2.3 million backpacks since 2001.

But the commitment to Elkhart's future runs deeper. On August 13, the Office Depot Foundation is hosting *Rx for Recovery: The Power of Community Partnerships*, a "Conversation on Community Renewal" at the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce. This symposium will provide an opportunity for some 35 Elkhart-area non-profit organization executives, business leaders and government officials to learn about the successful communitywide project that led to the creation of a community center for the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood in Indianapolis and to examine the vital role of collaboration in continuing to restore Elkhart's economic vitality.

This "Community Conversation" is modeled after the Foundation's annual "Weekend in Boca" Civil Society Leadership Symposium, which takes place in December in Boca Raton, Fla. Featured speakers include:

- Mary Wong, President of the Office Depot Foundation
- Jay Hein, President of the Indianapolis-based Sagamore Institute for Policy Research



- Rosemary Dorsa, Vice President for Partnerships & Special Initiatives, Central Indiana Community Foundation
- Rod Roberson, Director of Back-2-School Elkhart and Elkhart City Council Member, who will serve as host

“We came to Elkhart initially because we saw a community that was struggling under the weight of the economic downturn, but also showed great determination to overcome the obstacles it faced. Back-2-School Elkhart is just one example of how you are facing your challenges head-on and fighting your way back,” Wong explains. “We felt that it would be beneficial to many communities if we could share what was happening in Elkhart and bring its inspiration to others.”

Twice during the past year, Rod Roberson was a speaker at Office Depot Foundation events that presented opportunities for other community leaders to share similar experiences with challenges they faced, such as wildfires in San Diego, floods in Cedar Rapids and hurricanes on the Gulf Coast.

“The fundamental message that came through in each of these discussions,” Wong says, “is that none of us is, or should be, alone when it comes to strengthening our communities. We all share a common interest in helping the people to prosper, to enjoy good health and to have safe homes and a good education for their children. The way to achieve these goals most effectively is through collaboration. We are pleased to provide this opportunity for Elkhart’s leaders to meet, share ideas and consider new ways to work together for the good of the community.”

Adds Rod Roberson, “Back-2-School Elkhart originated and was built using a unique collaborative spirit with a single focused vision. We as a community will partner, prepare and motivate as many of our students as possible to be ready to learn. We welcome like-minded organizations like The Office Depot Foundation to the Elkhart community to enhance and strengthen this collaborative spirit.”

To learn more about the Office Depot Foundation, which serves as the independent charitable giving arm of Office Depot, please visit www.officedepotfoundation.org.

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The Office Depot Foundation is an independent foundation (tax exempt under IRC Sec. 501(c)(3)) that serves as the independent charitable giving arm of Office Depot, Inc. In keeping with its mission, Listen Learn Care®, the Foundation supports a variety of programs that help children succeed in school and in life; enable civil society (non-profit) organizations to become more efficient and effective; help people and businesses prepare for disasters, then recover and rebuild afterwards; strengthen local communities through grants, product donations and volunteerism; and encourage community development through entrepreneurship and economic innovation. More information can be found at www.officedepotfoundation.org. The Office Depot Foundation can be followed on Twitter at www.twitter.com/OfficeDepotFndn. Facebook members can find the Foundation’s page at (www.facebook.com/OfficeDepotFoundation).

