

TULSA WORLD

Groups ease the burden of school supply costs

BY SARA PLUMMER World Staff Writer

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This Friday is the start of Oklahoma's three-day tax-free holiday, when clothing and shoes that cost less than \$100 are exempt from sales tax.

But even with that help, for some families, back-to-school shopping is a burden and an expense that they just can't afford.

Several organizations and churches offer free school supplies to help offset those costs.

Since 1997, the Tulsa Community Foundation has operated PASS, the Partnership for the Availability of School Supplies, which provides free supplies for every student at 51 elementary schools in the Tulsa and Union school districts, said Elizabeth Vereecke, program officer at the foundation.

Elementary schools where at least 75 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunches receive PASS supplies twice a year, at the beginning of the school year and again at mid-school year.

"It started as an initiative of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation when they saw the problem of students not having the supplies they needed to learn," Vereecke said.

About 26,000 students get free supplies from PASS each year, and last year the organization expanded to offer teachers in those schools a set of school supplies, as well.

In addition, Restore Hope Ministries gives supplies to more than 2,500 students in Tulsa County each year, including middle and high school students.

"Our goal is to supplement PASS and the great work that they do," said Executive Director Jeff Jaynes. "We allow folks to come in who are in middle school and high school - other places in the county that PASS doesn't reach."

Restore Hope has been providing school supplies to families in need for more than 20 years, Jaynes said.

"The families we see are largely working families. That income is stretched with the cost of gas, school clothes," he said. "If you're having trouble with (buying) food, you're going to have trouble with pencils or glue sticks."

Kim Goddard, executive director of Broken Arrow Neighbors, said the need for school supplies has grown since the assistance agency has been holding a Back to School Bash along with the Broken Arrow Police Department and Tulsa

Technology Center.

In fact, "it has grown tremendously" since the event moved from the Police Department parking lot to Tulsa Tech's Broken Arrow campus several years ago, Goddard said. "We almost tripled it in size. We were able to bring far more resources together than we ever had before."

Broken Arrow Neighbors will hand out 700 packets of school supplies, but the event also offers families free haircuts, health screenings and immunizations, and has information booths from about 50 area assistance agencies.

"Anytime you have a city that is growing, (as Broken Arrow is,) unfortunately there's a percentage that remains stagnant," she said. "We try to fill in the missing gaps."

"If you are in need, don't hesitate to seek assistance."

Back-to-school assistance

What: Free school supplies

Where: Restore Hope Ministries, 2960 Charles Page Blvd.

When: 9:30-11:30 a.m. Aug. 5-9 and Aug. 12-15, and 12:30-2:30 p.m. Aug. 9.

Bring: Social Security cards for parent/guardian and child, photo identification for parent, name of school and grade of student

Eligible: Tulsa County public schools students in kindergarten through high school

For more: 918-582-5766

What: Clothes for Kids Back to School Festival with free school supplies, backpacks, uniform pants, gently used clothing, immunizations, dental screenings, children's activities and food

Where: John 3:16 Family Mission Youth Center, 2027 N. Cincinnati Ave.

When: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Aug. 10

Bring: Social Security cards, birth certificates or school enrollment information for children, proof of residency and current shot records if getting immunizations

Eligible: Tulsa-area students

For more: 918-592-1186

What: Cuts for Kids free haircuts

Where: Clary Sage College, 3131 S. Sheridan Road

When: 9:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Aug. 7-8

Eligible: Anyone 18 and under

For more: 918-298-8200

What: Cuts for Kids free haircuts

Where: Oklahoma Technical College, 4444 S. Sheridan Road

When: 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Aug. 14-15

For more: 918-895-7500

What: Back to School Bash with free school supplies, bags, haircuts, immunizations, children's activities, food and information booths for about 50 nonprofit organizations

Where: Tulsa Technology Center, 4600 S. Olive St., Broken Arrow

Sponsors: Broken Arrow Police Department, Broken Arrow Neighbors and Tulsa Technology Center

When: 9 a.m.-noon Aug 10

Bring: Current shot records if getting immunizations

Eligible: All students

For more: Call 918-251-7781

What: Back to School Rally with free school supplies, haircuts and gently used clothing

Where: First Baptist Church, 15296 Oklahoma 72, Coweta

When: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday

Bring: Proof of residency

Eligible: Students in Coweta, Porter and Haskell schools

For more: Call 918-486-2158

What: Back 2 School Bash with free school supplies, backpacks, immunizations and haircuts

Where: South County Outreach Center, 596 W. 141st St., Glenpool

When: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday

Eligible: Glenpool, Kiefer, Mounds and Liberty Mounds public schools students

For more: Call 918-321-2302

What: Register to receive free school supplies

Where: Owasso Community Resources, 109 N. Birch St., Owasso

When: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday and Aug. 9

Bring: Photo ID, proof of residency, proof of income and enrollment in Owasso or Collinsville public schools, birth certificates of children or court documents of guardianship

Eligible: Owasso and Collinsville public schools students who meet income guidelines

For more: Call 918-272-4969

What: Walmart clothing vouchers and free school supplies

Where: Sand Springs Community Services, Fourth Street and Garfield Avenue, Sand Springs

When: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Aug 13-14; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. Aug 15 on a first-come, first- served basis.

Bring: Proof of free lunch assistance from Sand Springs Public Schools, proof of residency and Social Security cards for each member of the household

Eligible: Sand Springs Public Schools students who qualify for the free lunch program

For more: Call 918-245-5183

What: Register to receive free school clothing

Where: Caring Community Friends' Kids Klostet, 12 W. Burnham Ave., Sapulpa

When: 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday

Bring: Photo ID, proof of residency, proof of income or no income, Social Security cards for whole family. Once application is filled out, an appointment will be made to come back to pick out clothes.

Eligible: Students must be enrolled in Sapulpa, Allen Bowden, Lone Star or Pretty Water public schools

For more: Call 918-224-6464

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Associated Images:

Volunteers including Adele Gruber (foreground) help put together school supply kits at Restore Hope Ministries in part of the organization's back-to-school assistance program. JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World



Volunteers including Sarah Duiveman, 13, of Tulsa, help put together school supply kits at Restore Hope Ministries Tuesday. JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World



A box of school supplies put together by volunteers at Restore Hope Ministries in Tulsa. JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World

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