

Southern California Edison Representative Visits Local School to See Kidz Fuel Snack Pack Program at Work



Beverly Powell, Region Manager/Public Affairs, Southern California Edison pictured on the left with an adult volunteer in the center handing a Kidz Fuel Snack Pack to a participating youth on the right.

San Bernardino, CA, November 11, 2010 – Beverly Powell, Local Public Affairs Corporate Representative, Southern California Edison (SCE), visited Emmerton Elementary School in San Bernardino to see the Kidz Fuel Snack Pack Program first-hand. SCE is particularly interested in assisting families facing financial hardships, and thanks to their generous corporate support, fewer children in this community will go to bed hungry. Research shows that hunger, even in its mildest forms, can have a lasting negative effect on children. Hungry children have poorer overall health and, as a result, miss more days of school and are less prepared to learn when they are able to attend. They are also more likely to have stunted growth, fatigue, poorer mental health, be withdrawn or socially disruptive, and suffer greater rates of behavioral disorders. The critical connection between nutrition and a child's development cannot be ignored.

Arrowhead United Way (AUW) is supported by major corporate sponsors like SCE which enables AUW to assist in the Kidz Fuel Snack Pack Program. The program is implemented by a coalition that includes fiscal sponsor Community Action Partnership and AUW, Helping Hands Pantry, Project Life Impact, San Bernardino City Unified School District-Family Resource Center, and the City of San Bernardino's Healthy San Bernardino Initiative. Children in the program are often homeless, in foster care, or identified by school staff as the "neediest of the needy". On-site coordinators enroll the children in the program, with parental permission.

Fifteen schools in the San Bernardino City Unified School District participate in the Kidz Fuel Snack Pack Program that serves nearly 600 very low income children with a nutritious food supply designed to sustain them over the weekend. Food bags are prepared on Thursday evenings at Helping Hands Pantry and on Fridays at noon at Project Life Impact. Volunteers select items based on food allocation guidelines to assure that the snack packs provide a healthy source of nutrition; items are child-friendly, nonperishable, and easily consumed. Backpacks are discreetly distributed to children each Friday or the last day before the weekend, going off track, or holiday vacation. Children bring the backpacks back to school on Monday and the cycle starts again. The cost of the food in each backpack is \$5.50 to \$8.00, or approximately \$16,640 per month. Financial and volunteer support is always needed to sustain the program.

AUW is a volunteer driven organization that actively supports health and human services by focusing on education, income and health. These services address the underlying causes of the community's issues and create lasting change. The organization was established in 1891 and is led by prominent respected community leaders; it is one of the oldest United Ways in the country.

AUW encourages individuals to become more involved in the community by giving, advocating, and volunteering. For more information about how to become involved with AUW, please call (909) 884-9441 or visit www.ArrowheadUnitedWay.org.