



START RIO...GO ANYWHERE

MEDIA RELEASE

3600 Workman Mill Road / Whittier, CA 90601

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Rio Hondo Launches Second Annual Case of Hope Backpack/Suitcase Drive for Foster Youths

WHITTIER – A new program serving foster youths at Rio Hondo College is partnering with campus and community groups to collect new and lightly used suitcases and backpacks for children and youths in foster care or who are transitioning from the system.

The Guardian Scholars Program, formed earlier this year, is conducting the College's second annual Case for Hope suitcase/backpack drive through Monday, Nov. 30. Leaders hope to gather between 100 and 150 bags.

Foster youths often shift homes without suitable bags for their possessions. The same need exists when they leave the system. Many must use trash bags or leave items behind.

"Our Rio Hondo College students, faculty and staff are committed to helping those in need in our community throughout the year," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "At this time of the year, they really kick it into overdrive. It's truly impressive."

Rio Hondo College's enrollment includes about 110 students in foster care or in transition – a number that grows annually. Since College began providing specialized services, nearly 300 foster youths or former foster youths have received assistance.

Guardian Scholars is partnering on the drive with the Rio Hondo College Foster/Kinship Care Education Program, Rio Hondo Associated Students, Student Life & Leadership and the Concept 7 Foster Family Agency.

Collection bins have been set up in the Foster/Kinship Care Education Office and Student Union at the College's Whittier campus, 3600 Workman Mill Road, and at Rio Hondo's El Monte Educational Center, 3017 Tyler Ave., El Monte. In the first week, about 30 bags were donated.

"This is a great beginning for our holiday charitable programs," said Board of Trustees President Madeline Shapiro. "I encourage all members of our community to take part in this giving effort."

The drive will culminate in a lunch at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 at Rio Hondo College's Rio Café, where the bags will be distributed to foster youths. For information, contact Guardians Scholars Interim Counselor/Coordinator Marisela Saenz at (562) 463-7472 or msaenz@riohondo.edu.

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Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to associate degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.