NEWS RELEASE

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TO: **PRESS/MEDIA** DATE: July 1, 2020

ADD: PAGES: 1

Release Date: **July 1, 2020**

UNITED WAYS' STUFF THE BUS INITIATIVE HELPS HOMELESS YOUTH IN THE REGION

United Way of Santa Cruz County's annual "Stuff the Bus" initiative will collect online monetary donations for low-income and homeless children in Santa Cruz County. The County Office of Education estimates there are **4,749** local children in our county classified as homeless or in transition. This number is likely to rise due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Stuff the bus initiative helps these children and youth start the school year on equal footing, helping to promote their academic success and well-being.

"Help with backpacks & school supplies alleviates added pressures from families so they can focus on other necessities such as rent, utilities, and food," said a representative from Pajaro Valley Unified School District's Healthy Start Program. "It can be a challenge to afford all of the required school supplies if the school year starts. Providing school supplies and items will tremendously help out our families during this time."

From July 1 – August 2, 2020, community members can provide monetary donations that supply school supplies and items online at unitedwaysc.org/stb.

Due to health precautions taken in accordance to the Santa Cruz County Public Health, this year's Stuff The Bus will be a virtual campaign, collecting online monetary donations only. Proceeds will purchase the requested school supplies and items and will be delivered to the Santa Cruz County Office of Education before the start of school.

United Way is accepting corporate sponsorships that include media recognition on all promotional materials. Last year, this event raised 2,500 backpacks filled with school supplies. This year United Way has a goal to provide supplies for every homeless youth in the County. These students are living with their families in shelters or motels, or their families have lost their homes and have moved in with relatives or friends.

"Every donation not only gives these children a chance to succeed in school and life but also represents a Santa Cruz County community member taking action towards equity and dignity for youth in our community," said Keisha Browder, Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Santa Cruz County.

If you are interested in learning more visit unitedwaysc.org/stb.

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