



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sunbeam Family Services Partners With Local Law Enforcement to Provide Grandparents Raising Grandchildren With Backpacks, School Supplies

OKLAHOMA CITY – Sunbeam Family Services and local law enforcement agencies are collaborating once again to distribute backpacks filled with school supplies to children raised by their grandparents. In the United States, more than a million children are being raised by grandparents without the presence of parents in the home and each year this number continues to rise. According to the US Census Bureau, grandparent-headed households are more likely to be without health insurance, more likely to receive public assistance and more likely to fall below the poverty line than parent-headed households.

The “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” backpack program at Sunbeam provides pre-qualified grandparents with backpacks filled with grade-specific school supplies for their grandchildren, helping to eliminate the financial burden of back to school expenses and ensuring their grandchildren are prepared for the upcoming school year. This year’s program will provide 450 children with school supplies. Backpack distribution will take place from **7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 27** at Sunbeam Family Services, 1100 NW 14th Street, Oklahoma City.

“Sunbeam’s hope, through providing grandparents raising their grandchildren with backpacks and school supplies, is that we help grandfamilies look forward to school with less financial strain. The average cost for a middle school student’s supplies is \$80 for the general school supply list,” said Andrea Snead, Sunbeam’s Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Coordinator. “These supplies are outside of the cost of clothing, shoes, transportation and activity fees. These costs often cut into their funds to pay their mortgage, rent, utilities or for groceries.”

There will also be a resource fair at the distribution event with other Oklahoma City support agencies and programs. Organizations at the Resource Fair include Allegiance Credit Union, Scissortail Community Development, Peaceful Family Solutions, Parent to Parent, TRIAD, Sooner Success, Infant Crisis Center, ONIE, OKDHS Medicare Assistance, and Variety Care.

Launched in 2003, the “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” program empowers grandparents by offering support groups, school supply assistance, holiday assistance, and other resources. This program receives funding through Title III-E funds administered by the Areawide Aging Agency. Grandparents, ages 55 years or older, who are raising their grandchildren are given support that will help them secure valuable resources and information for their family.

Grandfamilies receiving backpacks have already been identified and applications for the 2017 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren backpack distribution event are closed.

The event will be open to the media from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. for interviews and photos. Please contact Erin Engelke, Chief External Relations Officer at Sunbeam, at 405-609-2311 with media scheduling conflicts.

About Sunbeam Family Services:

Founded in 1907, Sunbeam Family Services is one of Oklahoma’s longest serving nonprofits, providing people of all ages with help, hope and the opportunity to succeed through early childhood, foster care, counseling and senior services. To learn more, visit www.sunbeamfamilyservices.org or follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

About TRIAD:

Established in 1997, TRIAD is a collaborative effort between the Oklahoma County Sheriff’s Office, local police departments and senior citizens working together to reduce and prevent crimes against seniors.

<http://oksheriff.org/community-information/triad/>