

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 1, 2019

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Sunbeam Provides School Supplies for 160 Grandfamilies

Sunbeam Partners with Areawide Aging Agency, TRIAD to provide school supply assistance to grandparents raising their grandchildren

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Sunbeam Family Services is partnering once again with the Areawide Aging Agency and TRIAD, a collaboration of seniors and local law enforcement agencies like the Oklahoma Police Department and Oklahoma County Sherri’s Office, to provide school supply assistance to families in the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) program. In total, 160 families, including 380 children, will have the schools supplies they need to start the year off right.

“Sunbeam celebrates our partnership with grandparents raising their grandchildren to ensure school success,” said Talena Ford, Sunbeam’s Grandparents Raising Grandchildren coordinator. “On average, \$100 is spent per child just on the bare minimum school supplies, not even including uniforms, shoes, calculators, and or any specialty items needed. By providing school supplies to our grandfamilies, they can shift their focus to other needs and reduce stress.”

School supplies include: backpacks filled with pencils, paper, highlighters, markers, pocket calculators, notebooks and folders. Sunbeam still has school supplies available for grandparents raising their grandchildren. For more information, contact Talena Ford at 405-609-6551 or tford@sunbeamfamilyservices.org.

This week, Sunbeam also hosted a resource fair at school supply pickup, which featured 13 agencies that may provide helpful services to grandfamilies. Participating agencies included: Community Action Agency, Cox Homelife, Nana’s Closet, Neighborhood Service Organizations, Oklahoma DHS Aging Services, ONIE, Peaceful Family Solutions, Positive Changes, Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, Shiloh Camp, Sooner Success, Sunbeam Family Services, and TANF. Cox Homelife provided additional support by purchasing hot dogs, buns and chips for families to enjoy during the event.

“It’s kind of like a conglomerate of people that want to help,” said Brent Whitson, a grandfather who is raising his grandson. “They all go through a big funnel. And Sunbeam is holding the funnel.”

Oklahoma ranks ninth in the nation for grandparents raising their grandchildren without the presence of parents in the home. Through the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program, Sunbeam supports Oklahomans age 55 and older raising grandchildren without the presence of parents who live in Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian and Logan counties. This program receives funding through Title III-E funds administered by the Areawide Aging Agency.

Sunbeam empowers grandparents raising grandchildren through support groups, school supply assistance, holiday assistance, and additional resources. For more information about the GRG program, visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org/GRG or contact Talena Ford at 405-609-6551 or tford@sunbeamfamilyservices.org

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About Sunbeam Family Services

Founded in 1907, Sunbeam Family Services is one of Oklahoma's longest serving nonprofits, providing help, hope and the opportunity to succeed to people of all ages in central Oklahoma through early childhood, counseling, foster care and senior services. To learn more, call 405-528-7721, visit 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, Oklahoma City Police Department and senior citizens working together to reduce and prevent crimes against seniors.

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

About AreaWide Aging Agency:

Since 1973, Areawide Aging Agency has been the principal developer, coordinator and provider of services which meet the needs and advance the dignity, independence, and quality of life of senior adults in central Oklahoma. Areawide Aging Agency is dedicated to advancing the dignity and independence of older adults in our community. Areawide assess the needs of seniors, coordinates programs such as congregate and home delivered meals, transportation, and respite care for caregivers.

Provided by Sunbeam Family Services through a Title III Older Americans Act Grant from Areawide Aging Agency and community partners. The Caregiver Fundamentals Program makes no distinction on the grounds of race, color, gender, age, ancestry, national origin, religion, or disability. A portion of the project costs are met by state and federal Older Americans Act funds from Areawide Aging Agency and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Aging Services Division. There are no costs to participants; however, donations are accepted. Suggested donation per services: Information Services, \$1/activity; Access Assistance, \$1/activity; Support Group, \$2.50/meeting; Respite, \$2.50/visit; School Supplies, \$5/family; and Training Seminar, \$5/seminar.