

## TCOG Eases Back to School Stress for Public Housing Children

SHERMAN, AUGUST 2, 2016 - Do you remember your excitement as a kid when it came time to pick out supplies for the new school year? How important it was to get just the right note book, backpack, #2 pencils and all the other items on your list? For many families, this is a time of fun and anticipation but for some, it is a time of stress and hardship.

Statistics show back to school costs can be in excess of \$100.00 per child, which doesn't include fees for any extracurricular activities. A family with multiple children will spend hundreds of dollars for just the basics and potentially not get everything on their list. This expense, added to an already stretched budget, may cause some families to forego other bills in an effort to purchase the necessary supplies.

To help offset the considerable costs, the TCOG Public Housing Social Services Program provided over 225 backpacks filled with various school items to the children living on TCOG Housing Authority properties. It took a full week to deliver backpacks to every child ages 5 to 17 living across the 18 cities of Public Housing.

LouAnn Taylor, TCOG Public Housing Social Service Coordinator stated. "Our goal was to alleviate some of the anxiety and stress that families feel at this time of year, "We want these kids to be eager to start school and feel good as they go to their first class".

"Education is so important to the future of our children; it is the foundation upon which they can build a successful life," said Dr. Susan B. Thomas, TCOG Executive Director. She went on to say, "Relieving some of the stress associated with the cost of starting the school year is a way we can improve quality of life which is what TCOG is all about."

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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