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The Junior League of Austin Feeds Del Valle School Children -
Kicks Off School Year with Pep Rallies at Local Elementary Schools

1 in 4 children in Texas is hungry. Food in Tummies (FIT) steps-in to help 1,500 children this year!

(September 2012 - Austin, TX) The backpack program kicked off today at Hillcrest Elementary and Baty Elementary where more than 96% of the enrolled students are considered economically disadvantaged and are currently enrolled in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP - which offers free and reduced meals). The NSLP addresses the issue of hunger during the week, but not on the weekend. **Children who go hungry over the weekend have higher rates of absenteeism, difficulty with concentration and classroom behavior.** In most cases, it takes a child who has gone hungry through the weekend until Wednesday to recover only to start the cycle again each Friday.

The FIT program steps in to fill that gap. The Junior League of Austin (JLA) manages the FIT program, which stands for Food In Tummies - Feeding Minds and Growing Bodies, in collaboration with the Del Valle Independent School District. Now in its fourth year, the FIT program volunteers provide approximately 1,500 backpacks each week to the entire student population at these schools.

The Junior League of Austin provides more than 200 volunteers to pack the backpacks, deliver them to the school each Friday, pick them up on Monday and re-pack them with food for the following week. The packs also include healthy bi-lingual recipe cards and nutrition tips each week to be shared with the student’s family. By feeding an entire student population currently experiencing food insecurity, Del Valle has seen improved attendance, reduced classroom disturbances, and increased test scores.

Founded in 1934, The Junior League of Austin is an organization of more than 2,200 women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. On an annual basis, The Junior League of Austin contributes substantial financial support to the Austin community and its members volunteer approximately 100,000 hours. Each dollar given to the community through the League is tripled in value by our volunteers’ time. For more information about The Junior League of Austin, call (512) 467-8982 or visit [www.jlaustin.org](http://www.jlaustin.org).