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OFFICEWORKS 2024 BACK TO SCHOOL APPEAL TO HELP THOUSANDS OF AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS THRIVE

Marking 11 years of the Officeworks Back to School Appeal, helping The Smith Family to provide educational support to students impacted by poverty

27 December 2023: Officeworks has launched its 2024 Back to School Appeal, aiming to raise funds for thousands of Australian students in need supported by The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program.

This year will mark 11 years of the Back to School Appeal, helping The Smith Family to support Australian students impacted by poverty. To date, Officeworks' customers and team members have contributed more than \$8 million through the annual Back to School Appeal, enabling more than 12,000 students across Australia to be supported through The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* scholarship program for an entire year.

More Australian families than ever are relying on support from The Smith Family for the school year ahead as cost-of-living increases add to the financial challenges already faced by many. Officeworks is calling on customers to help support students in need by donating to this year's appeal in-store or online until 11 February. All funds raised support the *Learning for Life* program, which helps families impacted by poverty afford the cost of their child's essential school supplies, as well as providing personal support and extra educational programs to help students stay motivated and connected to their learning.

14-year-old Shelby and his mum Sandy are one family supported on the *Learning for Life* program and say the financial support from The Smith Family was a welcome relief, especially at back-to-school time.

"Having The Smith Family's support has definitely helped us financially," Sandy said. "And it's definitely helped Shelby with his learning – way more than we could have imagined."

"The Smith Family has helped my mum pay for school uniforms and school shoes," Shelby said. "But the best thing about The Smith Family help is the tutoring. That's definitely helped me at school with English, writing and math."

"It's made me feel proud. I can easily do something that I couldn't before," he said. "By supporting The Smith Family, you are showing that you care about someone out there. Thank you for supporting students like me."

Officeworks Managing Director, Sarah Hunter, said: "We're passionate about ensuring every child in Australia has the opportunity have an education, no matter what their circumstances are, and we're proud of how Officeworks' long-term partnership with The Smith Family helps us to support strong educational outcomes for students impacted by poverty."

"The rising cost of living continues to add to the financial strain for families, and we know that The Smith Family and Officeworks both play critical roles in supporting students to have what they need to start and continue their education affordably. This year there are more families than ever before who need a helping hand, and together, with our customers, we are excited to make a real impact in students' lives, helping to close the literacy, numeracy and social connection divide for so many young people in Australia," she said.

The Smith Family's CEO, Doug Taylor said: "We are so grateful for the generous support Officeworks and their customers have provided The Smith Family through its Back to School campaign again this year and throughout our partnership. Now in its eleventh year, the Officeworks Back to School campaign continues to have an enormously positive impact on thousands of students experiencing disadvantage, by ensuring they start the new year with everything they need for school and continue to have ongoing tailored, evidence-based learning and mentoring support on The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program. The unwavering support we receive from Officeworks through this partnership, enables more children and young people to overcome educational inequality and create better futures for themselves through the power of education."

The Back to School Appeal is part of Officeworks' People and Planet Positive commitment to support 30,000 students by 2025. Having already supported more than 40,000 students since 2020, Officeworks recently revised this goal to support 60,000 students by 2025.

Customers can help raise vital funds to support The Smith Family and help children overcome educational inequality caused by poverty by making a donation in store or online. To find out more visit

www.officeworks.com.au/campaigns/donate.

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ABOUT OFFICEWORKS

Established in 1994 in Richmond, Victoria, Officeworks is committed to making bigger things happen for its customers, team, the community and stakeholders. It operates 169 stores across Australia, a website that is home to more than 40,000 products, a national call centre, and a business team that helps micro, small and medium-sized businesses start, run and grow and Australians to work, learn, create and connect.

Officeworks offers customers a wide range of office supplies, technology, furniture, art supplies, education resources and helpful services like print & copy and on-site and remote tech support through Geeks2U – delivering an experience that is easy and engaging, no matter how customers choose to shop.

Officeworks is focused on the safety, wellbeing and career progression of the more than 9,000 team members it employs. It's also dedicated to operating in a sustainable manner, including building and maintaining meaningful connections with the communities in which it operates, fundraising for its national partners and local community groups, continuing to reduce its impact on the environment and source responsibly.

ABOUT THE SMITH FAMILY

The Smith Family is a national children's education charity that works with children and young people to overcome educational inequality caused by poverty – so they can thrive now and into their futures. Visit www.thesmithfamily.com.au

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