

in the know & on the go!

in the know



As kids all across the country prepare to head back to school, many businesses such as Staples, Office Depot, CompUSA, and others are offering amazing deals on every day school supplies like pens, paper, folders, markers, glue, etc.

To take advantage of such incredible prices, North Carolina Regional Property Manager Tomeka Owens asked each property in her territory to purchase 5 bookbags, fill them with supplies, and then offer one book bag to each new rental applicant. For each new move-in that gets a book bag, the property will donate a book bag to a local charity to help those families in need this year.

"I got the 'Pack a Back' idea listening to the news one night," said Tomeka. "They were talking about state budget cuts and the high rate of unemployment, and I started thinking about all the kids at our communities and how many of their families are considered low or very low-income. My heart hurts because there are more people in need than there are people who can or are willing to lend a helping hand. I thought donating book bags would be a small way to help some child have what they need as they start school."

Three cheers to Tomeka for working to make a difference in the lives of her residents and community!

on the go



AmeriCorps member Valerie Leybag, AmeriCorps Program Director Jasmin Cotman, and Assistant Resident Services Director Tiffany Little recently went to the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in San Francisco. The annual conference, which was the world's largest gathering of volunteer leaders from the nonprofit, government, and corporate sectors, brought together more than 5,000 attendees from across the United States for training and networking with the aim of expanding the ranks and effectiveness of America's volunteers.

The opening plenary featured a star-studded lineup of elected officials and popular culture figures including First Lady Michelle Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California First Lady Maria Shriver, Matthew McConaughey, and an inspirational performance from Jon Bon Jovi, who stated that, "We're going to be the ones that make volunteerism hip. Together, and with the power of 'WE', we can start a revolution one soul at a time."

Said Jasmin, "Going to San Francisco was a terrific experience. We were so inspired by all the energy and enthusiasm the speakers and the conference attendees had for volunteering and making a difference in our communities." Jasmin added with a laugh: "Plus, Bon Jovi was there! He's one of my favorites! He surprised everybody by showing up and playing 3 songs. It was great!"