



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMUNITY SUPPORT HELPS LOCAL FOSTER YOUTH GET PREPARED FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

GAINESVILLE, FLA – Partnership for Strong Families (PSF), the lead community-based care agency in North Central Florida, and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) have partnered to ensure local children who have experienced abuse and neglect are prepared for their first day of school. On Wednesday, August 3, representatives from ACSO will join PSF staff in packing backpacks for some of the more than 300 children in need this year.

PSF conducts an annual Back to School Drive to support the children in their care who would not otherwise have access to the supplies they need for the new school year. These efforts are largely supported by more than 20 community organizations, businesses and individuals, including ACSO.

“It is our goal to ensure these children, many of whom will be in foster care for their first day of school, have every opportunity their peers are afforded,” stated Stephen Pennypacker, President/CEO of Partnership for Strong Families. “ACSO plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of our community’s children, and we are grateful for their support in ensuring the academic success of these children as well.”

Over the past month, ACSO has collected supplies and \$300 in monetary support for PSF’s Back to School Drive, but they wanted to do more.

“In order to ensure that our children enter the public school system equally and adequately prepared to meet the educational challenges ahead, we must all be an active participant, not only at an organizational level, but on an individual level as well,” said Sheriff Sadie Darnell. “I am proud of our ACSO family and their commitment to the betterment of our community both on and off-duty. It is our privilege to partner with PSF to begin the healing process for these children and contribute to their future success.”

To learn more about Partnership for Strong Families, please visit www.pfsf.org.

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About Partnership for Strong Families:

Partnership for Strong Families is the lead community-based care agency for Florida Judicial Circuits Three and Eight, including Alachua County. PSF is contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families to deliver comprehensive child welfare services to children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Partnership for Strong Families also works with at-risk families to prevent child abuse and to decrease the risk of children entering the foster care system. PSF serves more than 5,000 children in 13 counties annually.