



**Media Contact:** Sam Brace  
The Caliber Group  
(520) 795-4500  
[sbrace@calibergroup.com](mailto:sbrace@calibergroup.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Tucson Values Teachers Kicks Off School Supply Drive in Southern Arizona**

*Campaign to Help Local K-12 Teachers Avoid Purchasing Classroom Materials Out-of-Pocket*

**TUCSON, Ariz. (Sept. 15, 2009)** – Many Southern Arizona teachers are forced to buy school supplies with their own money, a dilemma that's now the focus of a regional initiative involving local businesses and organizations.

Tucson Values Teachers is working with Walgreens drugstores throughout Pima County and Sierra Vista to host the first "Tucson Supplies Teachers" campaign. Each store will host collection boxes from Sept. 15 to Oct. 16 for the community to drop off items such as notebooks, pencils and crayons.

"Each year teachers spend \$500 to \$1,000 of their salary for basic classroom supplies," said Jacquelyn Jackson, executive director of Tucson Values Teachers. "Now, factor that into being underpaid already. It's a sad situation that we hope the Tucson Supplies Teachers program can help fix."

More than 10,000 teachers at public, private and charter schools will receive donations throughout the project, as volunteers from the Metropolitan Pima Alliance, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Raytheon, Horizon Moving Systems and school foundations will deliver items as donation boxes are filled.

Jackson unveiled the program at the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce's State of Education luncheon held earlier today at the Tucson Convention Center. There she noted the campaign is part of fulfilling the organization's goal of increasing teacher salaries to nationally competitive levels within five years.

"We need to have teachers lining up to work in the region and staying here to educate generations of our youth," Jackson said. "Our campaign team is committed to building a strong community through the quality of available education."

Calvin Baker, superintendent of the Vail Unified School District, said at the luncheon that Tucson Values Teachers' efforts to recruit, retain and reward teachers are commendable.

"Many organizations only pay lip service to teachers about their lack of adequate pay and benefits," he said. "Tucson Values Teachers has come out with the best of intentions and I'm proud to see they are working toward changing the way education is viewed by the community."

Tucson Values Teachers' school supply campaign comes about at the end of its "Summer Breaks for Teachers" program that provided teachers with discounts on goods and services such as cars, furniture, food, hotel services and gym memberships.

"We're already planning initiatives for 2010 that will expand on this year's momentum," Jackson said.

For a full list of participating Walgreens drug stores, visit [www.tucsonvaluesteachers.org](http://www.tucsonvaluesteachers.org).

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**ABOUT TUCSON VALUES TEACHERS**

Tucson Values Teachers is a regional initiative determined to prove that we should not just talk about the importance of improving education, but must unify in action to retain, recruit and reward our K-12 teachers. The actions TVT takes recognize the critical role of teachers in our region and value the vital influence they have on Tucson's future. For more information, visit [www.tucsonvaluesteachers.org](http://www.tucsonvaluesteachers.org) or call (520) 327-7619.

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