

Blessings in a Backpack, Cigna Foundation and Cigna Provide Weekend Meals to George Washington Carver Elementary School Students

RICHMOND, Va., March 26, 2015 - Two hundred students at George Washington Carver Elementary School will receive backpacks filled with healthy food each weekend throughout the school year, made possible through a Cigna Foundation grant to [Blessings in a Backpack](#). The national child hunger relief non-profit will implement a three-year program at the school. To kick off the program, which is sponsored by Cigna (NYSE:CI), all 520 George Washington Carver Elementary School students will receive backpacks during a special event tomorrow morning.

The event will begin with an assembly to teach students about the importance of proper nutrition for healthy bodies, and will include a special performance from the fifth grade class at George Washington Carver Elementary. Richmond Public School Superintendent Dr. Dana T. Bedden will attend, along with representatives from Cigna and Blessings in a Backpack. Cigna dental mascot Mikey Molar will also make a special appearance to teach students about the link between nutrition and good oral health.

"Our backpacks give children the food they need during those times when free or reduced-priced school lunches are not available, such as on weekends," said Kevin Beam, chief operating officer for Blessings in a Backpack. "Working with the Cigna Foundation and Cigna will help bring national attention to the Blessings mission of feeding hungry children. Together, we can fight to end childhood hunger."

"The Cigna Foundation is committed to building a future where every child has the opportunity to achieve a healthier, more secure life," said David Figliuzzi, executive director of the Cigna Foundation. "Hunger has a significant impact on a child's physical, mental and academic well-being. By working together with Blessings, we can ensure students come to school each day healthy, engaged and ready to learn."

"More than one in six children in Virginia face a constant struggle against hunger," said Julia Huggins, president of Cigna's Mid-Atlantic market. "Child health and well-being is a primary focus for Cigna, and we're proud to work with Blessings in a Backpack as we focus on helping kids and families stay well."

Blessings in a Backpack is a results-oriented program designed to feed elementary school children whose families qualify for the federally funded National School Lunch Program and have little or no access to healthy food on the weekends. The program is supported nationally and locally by the Cigna Foundation and Cigna. Child wellness is a key focus of Cigna's corporate responsibility platform, **Cigna Connects**. In addition, Rich Stephens, Cigna's vice president of business development, serves on the Blessings in a Backpack board of directors.

Funding for the food-filled backpacks was provided by the Cigna Foundation. Cigna and the Cigna Foundation have contributed \$450,000 to Blessings in a Backpack, including a \$100,000 [World of Difference grant](#) to expand the program's reach nationwide.

About Blessings in a Backpack

Blessings in a Backpack, People Magazine's Charity of 2012, is a results-oriented program that is designed to feed elementary school children whose families qualify for the federally funded National School Lunch Program and have little or no food on the weekends. Better test scores, improved reading skills, positive behavior, improved health and increased attendance have all been attributed to the success of this program. As little as \$100 feeds one American school child in our program for an entire 38-week school year. Blessings in a Backpack is currently feeding over 72,000 children in 44 states, the District of Columbia and 700+ schools. Please visit www.blessingsinabackpack.org. We are Feeding the Future of America® - one school at a time.

About the Cigna Foundation

The Cigna Foundation is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI) and its subsidiaries. The Cigna Foundation supports organizations sharing its commitment to enhancing the health of individuals and families, and the well-being of their communities, with a special focus on those communities where Cigna employees live and work.

About Cigna

Cigna Corporation (NYSE:CI) is a global health service company dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and sense of security. All products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Life Insurance Company of North America and Cigna Life Insurance Company of New York. Such products and services include an integrated suite of health services, such as medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, vision, supplemental benefits, and other related products including group life, accident and disability insurance. Cigna maintains sales capability in 30 countries and jurisdictions, and has approximately 85 million customer relationships throughout the world. To learn more about Cigna®, including links to follow us on Facebook or Twitter, visit www.cigna.com.

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