

Program helps fill backpacks with supplies

By Ashley Reimers
areimers@ourcoloradonews.com

With the beginning of school just around the corner, the annual tradition of purchasing school supplies is on many parents' minds. But this task isn't always easy for families; some need extra help to get their little ones prepared for the big day.

That's where A Precious Child comes in. The nonprofit organization offers the Fill A Backpack program to families in need, providing all the supplies a student at any age would need for the first day of school.

"More than 217,000 kids in Colorado are living below the poverty line, and many of them are unprepared to start the upcoming school year," said Britta Robinson, associate director of A Precious Child. "This program provides all the essentials needed for that first day of school."

A Precious Child serves as a resource center in collaboration with schools, organizations, social services, fire and police departments, churches and shelters to ensure that all children in Colorado have their basic needs met. They serve seven Denver metro counties including Adams and Jefferson County.

Recently Robinson and her volunteers hosted a school supply drive on July 27, at Wal-Mart in Broomfield.

Robinson said this particular drive is one of their biggest efforts in reaching their goal of providing 6,000 backpacks filled with school supplies to children living in homeless shelters, foster homes or facing tough life challenges without access to basic needs.

"For this program we work in direct contact with local schools, shelters, abuse shelters and other agencies to receive requests from them for backpacks," Robinson said.

"We work hard to provide age-appropriate backpacks and supplies to the kids



From left, with Broomfield Police Officer Paul Resh, 9-year-old Orion George of Cub Scout Troop 321 in Thornton and A Precious Child staff members Courtney Rogers and Britta Robinson collect donations for A Precious Child's backpack supply drive on July 27 at Walmart in Broomfield. Photo by Pam Wagner

so we know they are getting what they need to be successful on that first day of school."

Other than supply drives, there are 70 collection boxes in the Denver metro area where people can drop off supplies.

Robinson said people can also drop off supplies at 557 Burbank Street, Unit E in Broomfield or make a \$30 donation

online at www.apreciouschild.org, which pays for a backpack filled with supplies.

"This program continues to grow every year because the need continues to grow. We rely heavily on our partners who donate and to our volunteers to put in the time to make this program happen," Robinson said.

"And it's all worth it when we can see

the smiling faces of the people in the agency or from the families receiving the backpacks because we know the students don't have to worry about supplies for school, they can be focused on their success in school."

For more information on the Fill A Backpack program, visit www.aprecious-child.org.

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4th, 5th & 6th Graders

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Where: McIlvay Park in Olde Town Arvada

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How: Fill out the entry form and send it or drop it off in our office, **ARVADA PRESS**, 110 N. Rubey Dr, Ste 120, Golden, CO 80403
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Spelling
Bee

Manufacturer Honored for Quality and Service

Arvada-based Easter-Owens named Colorado Company to Watch

By Sara Van Cleve
svancleve@ourcoloradonews.com

A family-owned Arvada business has been named a 2013 Colorado Company to Watch.

Easter-Owens, founded in 1955, moved from Denver to Arvada in 1983 as the company expanded.

Now, 30 years since its move, the manufacturing company has been named one of 50 Colorado companies to watch.

"It's quite an honor," said President and CEO of Easter-Owens David Easter. "They had 800 companies to choose from and we were picked as one of the 50. It's really a cool thing. It's nice to be recognized."

Colorado Companies to Watch, presented by Capital Value Advisors, each year honors second-stage companies that develop valuable products and services, create jobs and build industries throughout Colorado.

Easter-Owens engineers, designs and manufactures products for four key areas — power distribution, industrial controls, metal fabrication and detention systems.

Some of the company's major industries they create product for are the federal, state and local governments, the military, power plants, transportation, solar and wind power, mining and the oil and gas industry, currently their largest industry.

The majority of their products are made in-house, Easter said, and engineers are available to create nearly any

design. Some panels inside enclosures and buildings they make are ordered from other distributors.

"We have a part in a lot of different industries," Easter said.

"We have an excellent reputation for quality and service. Since 1955, we've had a tremendous amount of return and repeat customers."

Two major customers have been Lockheed Martin and Coors, Easter said.

Easter said the company would not be able to be where it is today without its 80 employees.

"I am thankful I have the people here to help make this all possible," he said. "That's the biggest part of our success — we have good folks."

Since its founding in 1955, Easter-Owens has increased its sales from about \$60,000 - \$70,000 per month to about \$20 million per month, Easter said.

Such growth is a criterion for being named a Colorado Company to Watch.

"It shows job creation because he is hiring and he's increasing his bottom line and growing the business," said Arvada Economic Development Association Marketing Manager Allison Trembly.

"Those are two great things for Arvada."

Trembly nominated Easter-Owens for the honor of being name a Colorado Company to Watch.

"First, they've been in Arvada as long as they have," she said.

"A second reason is their employees. They have 80 employees and are still hiring, so that's great for job creation. Third, they're one of our primary employers and bring a lot of money to the economy through their employees."

For more information on Easter-Owens, visit www.easter-owens.com.