



News Release

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ECBC collects record number of back-to-school supplies for military families despite furlough

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – It was with great hesitance initially that the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) decided to hold its annual Back-to-School Drive this year – due to the looming furlough implications. But, the Center's sixth Back-to-School Drive not only proved to be its most successful one thus far, but also proved that people will find ways to dig deeper, even in the midst of a furlough, if it is for a good cause.

On Aug. 20, ECBC presented a record number of Back-to-School donations, collected between July 8 and August 13, to the 20th Support Command and the 22nd Chemical Battalion.

"I'm very impressed and thankful to see the amount and variety of school supplies our workforce and partners 'literally' brought to the table this year," said ECBC Director of Program Integration Suzanne Milchling. "Actions speak louder than words, and our people have definitely spoken loudly."

In an effort to ease the burden of back-to-school expenses for military families in its neighboring community, ECBC's workforce collectively with employees from the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical and Biological Defense and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Joint Science and Technology Office donated more than 5,000 school supplies valued at approximately \$4,000. Donations included nearly 1,500 pencils, 900 ballpoint pens, 230 glue sticks, 500 erasers, 120 spiral notebooks, 180 crayon packs, 70 pairs of scissors, 160 pocket folders, more than 100 composition books and 20 book bags.

COL Kyle Nordmeyer from the 20th Support Command expressed his sincere appreciation for the substantial amount of donations his command and the 22nd Chemical Battalion accepted.

"On behalf of my command and the 22nd Chemical Battalion, I'd like to thank ECBC and its partnering organizations for their exceptional support," he said. "We are absolutely overwhelmed and humbled by the generosity of their employees, especially during a time when they experienced significant pay cuts."

More interesting than the value of this year's Back-to-School donations is the fact that employees contributed more supplies than in previous years during a time when they experienced a 20

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percent pay cut as part of the Department of Defense's recent civilian furlough.

"It is in spite of the recent furlough and because of our appreciation for the sacrifices you've endured that employees at ECBC and partnering organizations rose to the occasion," said ECBC Military Deputy COL Debra Daniels addressing the recipients of this drive. "It was that important to them to help make the beginning of this school year more pleasant for you and your families, regardless of their personal challenges."

On Aug. 23, more than 60 soldiers and family members of the 20th Support Command and the 22nd Chemical Battalion had the opportunity to scratch many items off of their back-to-school supply lists and select from a large variety of colorful items donations.

"It's so wonderful to see so many excited little faces here today," said Karen Towns, wife of LTC Eric Towns, commander of the 22nd Chemical Battalion. "It's been amazing to see kids simply light up when picking their new school supplies."

Please find additional photos on ECBC's Flickr stream:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/edgewoodchembiocenter/sets/72157635259986762/>

For more information about ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

ECBC is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our website at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil> or call (410) 436-7118.

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