



**BACKPACK MINISTRY:** Hope participates in the Citrus County Blessings Backpack Ministry. Hope is a host site that serves Forest Ridge elementary and Citrus Springs Elementary Schools. The program provides weekend food for children who without our assistance would arrive at school hungry on Monday mornings. Hope participates to help feed the children of less fortunate families on the weekends when school breakfast and lunch assisted-meals programs do not operate. Through Citrus County Blessings weekend meals program, children benefit by having increased access to vitamin-fortified food which leads to increased attendance at school, higher test scores, reduced behavioral problems, and increased parental participation. Hope volunteers unload food trucks on the last Saturday of the month and pack over 200 back-packs each Wednesday during the school year for distribution to the two elementary schools in our community.