

# NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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## **CALIFORNIA SERVICE CORPS GIVES SNEAK PEEK OF CaliforniaVolunteers.org AT GOVERNOR AND FIRST LADY'S CONFERENCE ON WOMEN**

### **Initiative Is Largest Statewide Volunteer Matching Network In The Nation, Connecting Californians to Volunteer Opportunities Across The Golden State**

### **First Lady Maria Shriver and California Service Corps Launch CaliforniaVolunteers.org on October 3**

**LONG BEACH, CA (September 26, 2006)**—The California Service Corps (CSC) gave a sneak peek today of **CaliforniaVolunteers.org**, an online volunteer matching network connecting Californians to volunteer opportunities across the Golden State. The initiative is the largest statewide volunteer matching network in the nation, and will be officially launched by California First Lady Maria Shriver and the CSC on October 3.

"CaliforniaVolunteers.org is more than a website; it's a call to action for all Californians to get connected to service opportunities in their local communities and beyond," said California First Lady Maria Shriver, honorary chair of the CSC. "One of California's greatest resources is the diversity of its people and communities, and this exciting new initiative is a model for other states that want to engage citizens to make a difference, one volunteer opportunity at a time."

Californians looking to volunteer can easily access CaliforniaVolunteers.org and find many opportunities in their local community through an intuitive, sophisticated online database. The website catalogues both short and long-term volunteer opportunities, allowing visitors to search by location, area of interest or length of commitment.

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Agencies and organizations all over California work in partnership with the CSC to list their opportunities on CaliforniaVolunteers.org. Potential volunteers can connect with participating volunteer agencies at the local level, helping CaliforniaVolunteers.org end users in selecting appropriate volunteer opportunities.

“CaliforniaVolunteers.org is the premier resource for all Californians who want to strengthen and support their communities through service and volunteerism,” said Karen Baker, Executive Director of the California Service Corps. “By working in partnership with community-based and nonprofit organizations all across California, the Service Corps has galvanized nearly 25,000 volunteer opportunities for this launch, and we expect that number to double over the course of the next year.”

The goals of the endeavor are to increase volunteerism across the state by engaging all Californians in service; help connect nonprofits organizations to potential volunteers; match Californians with volunteer opportunities that meet their interest and availability; and assist in the management of volunteers responding to and preparing for a disaster.

“Many nonprofits lack resources to adequately market their service opportunities, creating a disconnect between the high level of interest Californians have in serving and the actual time they are able to commit to volunteering. CaliforniaVolunteers.org connects volunteers to organizations, helping to close that gap,” Baker said.

The State of California currently ranks 40<sup>th</sup> out of all states for its level of volunteerism. According to a report released in June, 2006 by the Corporation for National and Community Service, approximately 7.27 million Californians completed some type of volunteer service in 2005, with only 30% of Californians ages 35 to 44 completing volunteer service between 2003 and 2005.

The Corporation's report further noted that for each of the 7.1 million California adults who volunteer, nearly three do not. A 1% increase in California volunteering represents 273,278 new volunteers and/or approximately 38.5 million additional volunteer hours.

At the time of its launch, CaliforniaVolunteers.org will already have catalogued more than 25,000 volunteer opportunities.

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That number is expected to double over the next year, according to CSC estimates. The website will have an official launch on October 3, 2006, with events in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles and in San Jose, attended by California First Lady Maria Shriver.

### **ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA SERVICE CORPS**

Headed by Executive Director Karen Baker, the California Service Corps (CSC) is charged with increasing the number of Californians involved with service and volunteerism throughout the state. The agency administers programs such as AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps, the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning, guides policy development to support the nonprofit and service fields, and is responsible for the coordination of CaliforniaVolunteers.org, a statewide network that matches Californians to volunteer opportunities in their communities. Through these programs and initiatives, Californians of all ages and abilities are provided with ongoing opportunities to volunteer, to become better prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters, and ultimately, to embrace a lifetime ethic of service.

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