



**Office of the Governor**

**For Immediate Release**

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**SECRETARY KAREN BAKER HOLDS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH NONPROFIT LEADERS IN VENTURA COUNTY TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING**  
*Visit is part of statewide listening tour held on heels of Governor Schwarzenegger's nation-leading action to elevate service and volunteering to his cabinet*

**Camarillo, CA** – Today, Karen Baker, Governor Schwarzenegger's newly-appointed secretary of service and volunteering met with leaders from the volunteer and nonprofit sectors in learn about challenges they face in recruiting and retaining volunteers and how she can use her new role to help address such challenges.

"Volunteers play a vital role in address the critical needs of our communities and state," remarked Karen Baker, secretary of Service and Volunteering. "The Governor and I recognize the need to more effectively utilize this powerful resource."

Secretary Baker's visit to Ventura County is one of 25 stops on a statewide tour that began on February 27. She is meeting with leaders from the nonprofit sectors, public agencies, philanthropy, corporate sector, emergency managers and volunteer organizations active in disaster. The purpose of the listening tour is to engage nonprofits and public agencies in dialogue to better understand the status of and needs for volunteering in local communities and explore opportunities to build partnerships and tackle the barriers to volunteering in California.

"Secretary Baker's stop in Ventura County provided local nonprofits an inside ear that is not often afforded to them by state government," said David M. Smith , president and CEO of United Way of Ventura County "We have noticed a tremendous amount of enthusiasm from the nonprofit community, as evidenced by the more than 100 leaders from nonprofits who participated."

The listening tour comes on the heels of the Governor's nation-leading action to establish a cabinet-level position on service and volunteering. This new position will raise the profile of service in the Golden State to a national level; improve coordination of vital volunteer activities statewide and support local service efforts; encourage more Californians to become involved with service and volunteerism; help California respond to natural disasters and emergencies; and give California's volunteers a voice at the highest levels of state government.

For more information about the volunteering in California or the establishment of a secretary of service and volunteering visit [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://CaliforniaVolunteers.org).

**ABOUT CALIFORNIAVOLUNTEERS**

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program, California Citizen Corps and the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning. Through the innovative Web site, [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://CaliforniaVolunteers.org), individuals and families can find more than 40,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation's first state cabinet secretary of service and volunteering leads the organization and First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chairperson. For more information, please visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org).

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