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First Lady Maria Shriver and CaliforniaVolunteers to Build First Fully Intergenerational Playground in San Francisco

Service Project will Kick-Off the 2009 National Conference on Service and Volunteering and Honor Service Leader Cesar E. Chavez

Sacramento, CA – California First Lady Maria Shriver and CaliforniaVolunteers will sponsor the first fully intergenerational volunteer-built playground in the nation, providing a space for people of all ages to come together and play. The playground build will take place on Monday, June 22 at Bret Harte Elementary School in San Francisco, kicking off the 2009 National Conference on Service and Volunteering. The event will mark Shriver's 31st playground build throughout California, inspired by her commitment to create safe play spaces for children and honor the legacy and dedication to community service of Cesar E. Chavez. The playground project will be planned using an innovative community-build model led by national nonprofit KaBOOM!, which has coordinated construction of more than 1,600 play spaces across North America.

“This is more than a play space, this is a testament to the fact that Californians of any age can unite around the concept of play, serve their communities and create an inclusive environment that transcends age diversity,” said First Lady Maria Shriver. “This trailblazing play space truly embraces the philosophy that playground lessons last a lifetime and regardless of age, WE never outgrow play.”

More than 300 volunteers from the community and the San Francisco School Volunteers program, as well as attendees of the National Conference on Service and Volunteering are expected to join the construction of each of the playground's elements in just one day. In addition, a unique mural and garden will be established at the school to honor the life and legacy of Cesar E. Chavez. The edible garden will feature a farmer's market stand, allowing kids and seniors from the community to create a micro enterprise, sell vegetables and raise money for the school.

“Cesar E. Chavez was a champion of service and community involvement, and this entire initiative is a great way to honor his legacy,” said Karen Baker, Secretary of Service and Volunteering. “This initiative clearly demonstrates the power volunteers have to shape their communities.”

Planning for the project began last week, when kids from the school and the surrounding community, parents, seniors and representatives from the local Alzheimer's association met with project organizers to share ideas for their dream play spaces. This play space marks the first fully intergenerational project led by KaBOOM!, with kids, parents, seniors and Alzheimer's experts engaged in every step of the planning and construction process.

“Having a great place to play is an absolute necessity for children, but people need to also remember that play spaces aren't just for children – they're meant to be community gathering

spots people of all ages can enjoy together,” said Darell Hammond, chief executive officer and co-founder of KaBOOM!

“People with dementia sometimes need physical and mental stimulation beyond what their families are able to provide,” said William H. Fisher, chief executive officer of the Alzheimer's Association, Northern California and Northern Nevada Chapter. “This intergenerational play space offers those affected by Alzheimer’s disease – and indeed all members of the community – the opportunity for activity and socialization in a safe, non-structured setting where they can exercise their minds and bodies.”

The intergenerational play space collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association, Northern California and Northern Nevada Chapter continues Shriver’s advocacy on behalf of families struggling with Alzheimer’s disease. Shriver is Executive Producer of The Alzheimer’s Project, a groundbreaking four-part documentary series airing this May on HBO. The series will take a close look at cutting-edge work being done in the country’s leading Alzheimer’s laboratories. It will also examine the effects of this disease on patients and families.

Those interested in participating in the playground build project can sign-up by visiting www.californiavolunteers.org.

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, individuals and families can find more than 45,000 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.

National Conference on Service and Volunteering

The 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service, taking place June 22-24 in the heart of San Francisco, is the world's largest gathering of volunteer and service leaders from the nonprofit, government, and corporate sectors. The conference taps into the renewed enthusiasm for volunteering to meet critical community needs and participate in vital conversations about the future of service and volunteering in America. Learn about the historic Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and its implications for the nonprofit and volunteer sector. Come away inspired, refreshed and energized! This year's theme — "Civic. Energy. Generation." — reflects the tremendous excitement in our nation today as people of all ages and backgrounds unify in a powerful movement to bring about social change. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.volunteeringandservice.org/>.

KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is a national nonprofit organization that envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America. Since 1995, KaBOOM! has used its innovative community-build model to bring together business and community interests to construct more than 1,600 new playgrounds, skate parks, sports fields and ice rinks across North America. KaBOOM! also offers a variety of resources, including an online community, regional and national trainings, grants, publications and the KaBOOM! National Campaign for Play, which includes Playful City USA and the Playmaker Network – a national network of individual advocates for play. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., KaBOOM! also has offices in Chicago and San Mateo, Calif. For more information, visit www.kaboom.org.

San Francisco School Volunteers

San Francisco School Volunteers is the largest source of volunteers for San Francisco public schools. Established in 1963, School Volunteers' singular focus on serving public schools has made it an integral part of the city's education system. Last year we trained and placed more than 1,600 concerned citizens who answered teachers' requests for help. End year surveys from teachers with a volunteer show that 98% of teachers report their teaching is enhanced as a result of our volunteers. For more information, visit <http://www.sfsv.org/>.

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