

News Release #1: National Volunteer Week Salutes Volunteers in (State)

(HOMETOWN, STATE) – Each year, thousands of volunteers in (State) donate their time and energy to make their communities a better place to live. These volunteers will be among the millions across the country who will be spotlighted during National Volunteer Week, April 18-24, 2004.

One group that relies heavily on volunteers is the (County) 4-H program. This year, (total number) volunteers, both young and old, have served as club leaders and project leaders for the (number) 4-H clubs in (County).

******(Add quote from 4-H youth educator or specialist about impact of volunteers to 4-H program.)******

Volunteers spend numerous hours working on tasks, such as helping organize an event at the county fair, helping a child with a 4-H project or leading a community service project.

******(Add quote from a 4-H volunteer.)******

Club volunteers are only one group of leaders across the state who are instrumental in carrying out the mission of the (State) Cooperative Extension Service. They are involved in every aspect of the county extension service, including determining the needs of the residents, planning programs, securing resources and evaluating programs.

An example of this is the (County) Extension Council. The (number)-member board, which consists of elected and appointed citizens, works with the county Extension staff to plan and oversee Extension activities.

******(Quote from another county Extension staff.)******

The work of Extension volunteers is continuous. Every day a volunteer is lending a helping hand to make Extension programs beneficial to the residents of (County).

Submitted by: Mary Jo Williams, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Missouri

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News Release #2: Everyday Heroes Deserve Recognition

The example of adult volunteers turning out to help strangers affected by the September 11 attacks made a big impression on children and teens.

In fact, nine out of 10 kids who responded to a National 4-H Council survey taken shortly after the attacks said they are more likely to volunteer and get involved in their community after seeing, reading, and hearing about others who volunteered after the September terrorist attacks.

Linda Kustka, University of Wisconsin-Extension 4-H youth development specialist, says the study underlines the need young people have for what she calls “everyday heroes.”

“Kids need a role model, someone they can admire and look up to, some one they aspire to be like,” Kustka said. Often, she added, kids find those heroes among the adults who work as volunteers in 4-H clubs, schools, and other youth organizations.

“One of the important things “heroes” do is show kids examples of how they can do good in the world. So many of the people we see on the news on television are those who have done horrendous things – criminals or terrorists. But our heroes are people who show us the other side -- the good side -- of human nature.

Kustka said every day heroes exist almost everywhere, often out of the limelight. “Heroes are not necessarily famous, but that doesn’t make their contributions any less valuable.”

Kustka also thinks that people who volunteer their time and resources possess many of the characteristics of heroes.

- Heroes make personal sacrifices. Volunteers do this frequently, Kustka said, giving their time, their money, and their talents to help others.
- Heroes do things that are difficult – or impossible. A heroic volunteer hangs on even when the task is not at all easy. For example, a volunteer tutor may face resistance or even hostility from the children he or she is trying to help. But with perseverance, the tutor finally wins the child’s trust and eventually makes a difference in that child’s life.
- Heroes are courageous. Volunteers frequently take brave and lonely stands to advocate for causes they believe in.
- Heroes are strong. Volunteers who give their time to civic causes often are strengthened by their desire to battle injustices that are beyond their own self-interest.

When these volunteer-heroes work with young people, the kids learn some important lessons about how one individual can make a difference.

“We seem to think that a hero has to have superhuman qualities,” Kustka said. “But there are unlikely heroes everywhere, people who are able to get things done. They may not be the flashiest people in the room, but they are the greatest.”

Source: Independent Sector

News Release #3: National Study Finds that Households With Volunteering Adults Donate More Money

Households with volunteers give more money to charities than households of respondents who don't volunteer according to the national study sponsored by the Independent Sector, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States 2001*.

"Contributing households where the survey respondent volunteered also gave a much higher amount than other contributing households," the study reported. These households actually gave on the average more than twice the amount of households where the respondent didn't volunteer. (\$2,295 from volunteers and \$1,009 from non-volunteers.)

Other than volunteering the greatest impact on whether a household gave was associated with being asked to give. While just over half (56%) of all households surveyed were asked to give, of those, 95% contributed to one or more causes. Just 79% of households that were not asked actually contributed. The asked households gave nearly twice the amount of those not asked.

Households where the respondent has been involved in contributory activities as a youth continued giving as adults (92% vs. 82% for those with this youth experience). Their average household contribution was one third higher (\$1,869 vs. \$1,219). The kinds of youth involvement activities explored in the survey included:

- Belong to a youth group?
- Do some kind of volunteer work?
- Help raise money for a cause or organization?
- Want to make a significant change in society?
- Were active in student government?
- Were active in a religious organization?

Another positive correlation with giving and volunteering identified by the survey was current attendance at religious services. Those who attended services at least once a month gave more than double the amount of non-attendees (\$2,151 to \$964) on average.

On the other hand, last year's survey found that households where the respondent was worried about having enough money in the future gave significantly less. The 59% of households where a

respondent was worried gave an average of \$1,201 the previous year compared with \$2,205 where the respondent did not report these concerns.

Independent Sector is a Washington, D.C.-based forum that collects and analyzes research on the nonprofit sector. The research, which was conducted by Westat, Inc., includes random telephone surveys with adults ages 21 years and older. The Independent Sector publishes the study, titled *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, every two-three years. The study researches issues that affect giving and volunteering, including behavioral and motivational factors.

Submitted by: Mary Jo Williams, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Missouri and Mary Kay Munson, Extension Specialist, 4-H/Youth, University of Illinois

Source: Independent Sector

News Release #4: Family Volunteering Benefits Everyone

“The increasing trend of volunteering with family members is great for the family, for the people and the causes they help, and for the future of the community” says _____ (name), _____ (position).

National survey results provided by the Independent Sector document the increasing popularity of family members volunteering together. They also show that family volunteering is having an impact in several ways. The study, conducted in 1998, found 28% of all respondents reported volunteering with other members of their families, and 51% of those who were volunteering had done some of their volunteering with a family member. The percentage is up three points from 48% in the similar 1995 survey and has increased steadily since 1991 when 41% volunteered with family members.

Family volunteering increases the help available to community causes. It makes more volunteer hours available in the community today and throughout lifetimes of children involved. _____ notes that there is substantial evidence that when children are involved with adult family members, their volunteering behavior is influenced in adulthood. Of all volunteers in the 1998 survey, 72% reported they were active volunteers as children. Eight of ten of the volunteers saw family members helping others when young. When they'd seen both parents volunteer, the trend was even more likely to continue as adults with 42.5% vs. 29.7% reporting they volunteer with family today.

Volunteering with family members is associated with increased volunteer time (4.3 hours per week for family volunteers vs. 3.5 hours per week for those who didn't volunteer with family). They were also more likely to volunteer at regularly-scheduled times (45% vs. 33%).

Volunteering with family members can help strengthen the family, _____ said. Youth can develop an understanding of issues of those in need, gain a belief that they can make a difference in the community, and build skills and explore careers, while having positive experiences with their family members. Most families enjoy spending the quality time together.

Independent Sector has recommendations for groups that want to take advantage of this growing theme in volunteerism in its publication, *America's Families Volunteer*. Organizations should recognize that over half (53%) of family volunteers found out about the opportunities through an organization, group or job site where they were associated. Religious organizations were the most significant. Thus, they should work through these groups to recruit families. Nearly half of the volunteers were asked to be involved, so enlist current volunteers to ask others in their families and organizations where they belong. Also, encourage current volunteers to bring along family members.

Obviously, the roles for volunteers will need be revisited to make family volunteering a reality. Options for various age groups working together are needed. Hours and lengths of volunteer assignments may need to be adjusted. Describe the tasks involved, so that parents can judge how well their family members fit in.

For more ideas on family volunteering and to obtain the *America's Families Volunteer* publication, go to the Independent Sector web site www.independentsector.org or call 1-888-860-8118.

Submitted by: Mary Kay Munson

News Release #5: Just a Click Away

How can I be a better youth program volunteer? Is there some place I can go to find out more about working with kids? The meeting starts in an hour, where can I get help NOW? The kids are a snap, but how do I deal with those parents? Are these questions you find yourself asking?

Now there is a quick and easy resource for you. **Volunteers...the foundation of youth development** is a free, no obligation web site that helps those who work with youth to promote positive youth development more effectively. Just a "mouse-click" away, the site offers five lessons including information on how kids develop, how to provide meaningful hands-on experiences, how to include youth as partners and resources, how to manage groups of kids, and how to work with parents and other adults.

Since May 1999, more than 6,000 volunteers from nearly every U.S. state and several countries have visited the site. The average visitor is a 30-50 year old female living on a farm or non-farm/rural area closely followed by those from cities larger than 40,000. Visitors to the site work with young people through 4-H and other youth-serving organizations, schools, and places of worship. Volunteering from one day to more than 50 years, site visitors are looking for quick, convenient and reliable ways to learn more about young people.

Volunteers...the foundation of youth development is provided to you by 4-H Youth Development programs in Missouri, Kansas and North Dakota. Visit the site at: <http://dlcd-courses.ext.missouri.edu/umc/4h-Volunteers/>.

Source: Mary Jo Williams, University of Missouri

Source: Aimee Ray, 608-265-8976, raya@admin.uwex.edu

News Release #6: Youth Volunteers Gain Valuable Leadership and Career Skills

Volunteering is a gift to a whole community, but Aimee Ray, former Wisconsin YES (Youth Engaged in Service) Ambassador says it's a gift that benefits both the recipient and the giver.

"Many people who volunteer say they do it because they find it is personally rewarding and satisfying," Ray explained. "For young people, volunteering is a way to gain experience, leadership skills and career skills. They get a lot back for what they give."

"Young people get a variety of personal benefits and satisfactions from volunteering," she continued. "The Search Institute (a Minnesota organization that promotes principles of positive youth development) has identified a number of assets youth need to succeed. Many of these assets come through volunteering." For example, Ray said, youth who volunteer:

- Develop good relationships with adults
- Get support from adults
- Experience caring neighbors
- Believe their community values them
- Participate in school or community services
- Learn actively about civics
- Take responsibility
- Plan and make decisions
- Get along with others from different cultures.

Leadership skills and experiences are especially important, Ray said, citing findings from a 1998 report from Princeton Survey Research Associates. "Young people get a variety of leadership experiences and skills by volunteering. They help make decisions, plan and lead meetings, make speeches, contact government officials, and coordinate events with other groups."

"I think that young people who volunteer gain a different view of leadership," Ray added. "They are more likely to believe that small groups or individuals can solve societal problems and less likely to rely on others or on institutions to solve problems." However, she says youth volunteer for many of the same reasons adults do - because they get personal satisfaction out of working to help others and to improve their communities.

And like adults, they volunteer because someone asked them to.

"One study found that 89 percent of people who volunteer were asked to by friends or family," Ray said. "Communities have a potential wealth of enthusiastic volunteers, if they create infrastructures that encourage real participation by youth."

In addition, since most people who volunteer when they are young, continue to volunteer as adults, communities who encourage youth involvement will have a larger number of volunteers in the future.

Submitted by: Mary Ellen Bell, Public Information Specialist, University of Wisconsin

Source: Independent Sector and Linda Kustka, 4-H Youth Specialist, University of Wisconsin

News Release #7: Teens Benefit From Giving of Their Time as Volunteers

When children and teens get together to clean up a strip of highway, visit residents of a nursing home or help a young child learn a new skill, they may get back as much as they give, according to a 1996 Gallup survey on volunteering among youth.

"There's no question that communities benefit when kids volunteer," says Linda Kustka, 4-H youth development specialist at the University of Wisconsin-Extension. "Every year, kids in 4-H clubs, for example plan some kind of volunteer or citizenship project to benefit their community."

These volunteer activities may range from helping to socialize puppies that are going into training as helper dogs for people with disabilities to raking up leaves for a elderly neighbor who can't do the job anymore.

But the survey on volunteering indicates that the young volunteers themselves reap some big benefits.

Of the teens interviewed for the survey, 32 percent said their grades went up; 30 percent developed new career goals and 34 percent explored new career options because of their volunteer work.

The teens also listed other benefits including learning respect for others, learning to be helpful and kind and getting along better with others. More than 90 percent said they gained satisfaction from helping other. And 63 percent noted that volunteer experience will look good on their resumes.

Kustka said it's clear that young people feel good about filling a need. "Volunteering builds confidence," she said. "Kids who volunteer come to realize that one person can do something to make a difference."

Copies of the booklet *America's Teenage Volunteers* may be downloaded from Independent Sector's web site or purchased by non-members for \$5. The complete research study *Volunteering and Giving Among Teenagers* (\$20.00) is available, contact Independent Sector at 888-860-8118 or www.independentsector.org.

Submitted by: Mary Ellen Bell, Public Information Specialist, University of Wisconsin

News Release #8: National Survey Recounts Motivation of Teen Volunteers

(HOMETOWN, STATE) – A survey of young people nationwide found that teens who volunteer learned to respect others, to be helpful and kind, and to get along with and relate to other people.

A national survey from the Gallup Organization for the Independent Sector also accumulated data on the motivation behind teens who volunteer. This survey shows that young people in the United States volunteered for three primary reasons. The highest response was that they felt compassion towards people in need. Secondly, they could do something for a cause that was important to them, and, third, they believed that if they helped others, others would help them.

Two other reasons cited dealt with seeing people they respected volunteer and volunteering helped them gain a new perspective on things.

From July to August 1996, the Gallup Organization conducted in-home personal interviews with 1,007 teenagers 12 and 17 years old. The interviews were based on questionnaires developed by Independent Sector to learn about their volunteering and giving patterns during the previous year.

One result of the Giving and Volunteering in the United States survey reported that 59 percent of the teenagers volunteered, which includes about 13.3 of the 22.5 million young people in the United States. The number of females and males who volunteered was similar, about 60 percent.

**** (Add quote from local expert on youths about what teens gain from volunteering.) ****

To find out more about volunteering opportunities, call the (County) Extension Office at (Address or telephone number).

Submitted by: Mary Jo Williams, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Missouri