



USA FREEDOM CORPS
2003 ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING A CULTURE OF SERVICE



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 2004

My Fellow Americans:

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, I created the USA Freedom Corps at the White House to encourage more Americans to serve and to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility for decades to come. I called on all Americans to dedicate two years, or 4,000 hours, over the course of their lifetimes to help those in need, and the response has been tremendous.

Whether mentoring a child, building a home, or sharing the values of compassion and goodwill around the world, last year more than 63 million Americans participated in volunteer service activities. This is an increase of nearly four million more volunteers than the year before.

The millions of citizens involved in volunteer service help define the character of America. The strength of America is found in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens who are willing to love a neighbor just like they would like to be loved themselves.

I ask every American in the next year to join with the USA Freedom Corps and millions of other citizens who are already answering the Call to Service. America is a compassionate and generous land, and there is much to be done. We can all help to better the lives of those in need here at home and around the world.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Overview of the USA Freedom Corps

As a Coordinating Council housed at the White House and chaired by President George W. Bush, we are working to strengthen our culture of service and help provide meaningful opportunities for Americans to serve.

In 2002, President Bush called upon every American to strengthen our communities and share America's compassion around the world. He called on each of us to dedicate at least two years over the course of our lives to the service of others. He created the USA Freedom Corps to help all Americans answer his Call to Service.

While government cannot fulfill the need for kindness, for understanding, and for love in our communities, through the USA Freedom Corps, government can support the momentum of millions of acts of kindness and decency that are changing America one heart at a time.

Americans of all ages are serving others in countless ways, by mentoring a child, caring for an elderly neighbor, teaching someone to read, or donating food and clothing to those who need them.

The response to the President's Call to Service has been enthusiastic and strong. Through the USA Freedom Corps, more than 900 local communities have formed Citizen Corps Councils; medical and public health professionals in more than 170 communities are now part of the new Medical Reserve Corps; participation in Neighborhood Watch programs has increased significantly; the database identifying opportunities to volunteer in police departments has increased 900 percent; and Community Emergency Response Team training has more than tripled, expanding to more than 850 teams in 51 states and territories.

For FY 04, the Peace Corps received its largest budget ever and has grown to nearly 7,600 members, while the President's new Volunteers for Prosperity initiative is enlisting thousands of American professionals to volunteer abroad to support global health and prosperity. Congress approved the President's FY 04 request for the largest level of funding in AmeriCorps history, which will allow AmeriCorps to meet the President's goal of expanding from 50,000 to 75,000 members.

This report provides an update on the progress made by the USA Freedom Corps in engaging thousands of organizations and millions of Americans in volunteer service in 2003.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS FOR 2003

JANUARY 2

President Bush proclaims National Mentoring Month.

JANUARY 23

Save A Life Foundation becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

JANUARY 30

President Bush commemorates first anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps and announces a new President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. The President also introduces new Volunteer Service Action Priorities including a new initiative to match disadvantaged children with caring mentors.

USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network

The USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network is the most comprehensive clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities in America. Prospective volunteers can enter geographic information about where they want to serve, such as their state or zip code, and areas of interest ranging from education to the environment, to access millions of volunteer opportunities offered by over 75,000 partner organizations across the country and around the world. The number of organizations has grown in the past year from more than 60,000 to more than 75,000.

The USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network offers potential volunteers millions of opportunities through an unmatched partnership that includes private volunteer service organizations like America's Promise, Idealist.org, National Mentoring Partnership, Network for Good, SERVENet, the Points of Light Foundation, The United Way, and VolunteerMatch. The USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network also includes Federal service opportunities, such as Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve America, Citizen Corps, and Take Pride in America.

The USA Freedom Corps web site offers other tools to potential and current volunteers to assist them in making their volunteer experiences positive ones, in meaningfully reflecting upon their experiences with an online Record of Service, or in finding information on scholarship and recognition programs. It also offers a platform for sharing wise practices for recruiting, training, and utilizing volunteer skills and time.

In 2003, there were more than 2.5 million visitors to the USA Freedom Corps web site, with more than 340,000 web users completing searches for volunteer service opportunities with the USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network.

The USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network is available online at www.USAFreedomCorps.gov.

MARCH 1

Peace Corps celebrates its 42nd anniversary.

MARCH 8

The U.S. Junior Chamber becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

MARCH 24

Commerce Secretary Evans, USAID Administrator Natsios, USA Freedom Corps Director Bridgeland, and Peace Corps Director Vasquez announce Digital Freedom Initiative pilot program with Senegal.

President's Council on Service and Civic Participation

In January 2003, President Bush created the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to promote and recognize outstanding volunteer service and raise awareness of the many ways in which Americans can continue to help meet the vital needs of their communities through civic engagement and service. Chaired by former professional football player Darrell Green, with former U.S. Senators Bob Dole and John Glenn serving as honorary co-chairs, the Council includes leaders from government, media, entertainment, business, education, non-profit, and volunteer organizations, as well as individual community volunteers.

Honoring the commitment of our nation's volunteers sets a standard for service to others. This Council, housed at the Corporation for National and Community Service, recognizes Americans of all ages for their outstanding volunteer service and encourages more such activity through the distribution of the President's Volunteer Service Award. The Award is the first major initiative of the Council and was created to thank Americans who are answering the President's Call to Service, and to honor the tens of millions of Americans who have made a sustained commitment to their communities and their country through volunteer service. The Award is given to individuals, families, and groups that have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service and civic participation over the course of a 12-month period.

The Award is given to youth (ages 14 and under) who have completed 50 or more hours of volunteer service, to individuals 15 and older who have completed 100 or more hours, and to families or groups who have completed 200 or more hours. Lifetime achievement is recognized with a special President's Call to Service Award, which honors those who have provided more than 4,000 hours of service over the course of their lifetime.

In 2003, more than 1,300 organizations signed up as Certifying and Leadership Organizations which are charged with verifying that volunteer service has been completed and presenting dedicated volunteers with this award.

While volunteers are making significant contributions to their communities in many areas, volunteers were encouraged this year to participate in services that address particular areas of need in our nation. Priority areas for 2003 included: Youth Achievement, Parks and Open Spaces, Healthy Communities, and Public Safety and Emergency Response.

Administered by the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, the President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes the best in the American spirit.

MARCH 28

The National Volunteer Fire Council becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

MARCH 25

USA Freedom Corps launches a new resource for people seeking to support our troops, their families, and their communities called "On the Homefront."

Strengthening National Service

PEACE CORPS

Since 1961, more than 170,000 volunteers have served in the Peace Corps, working in such diverse fields as education, health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, information technology, business development, the environment, and agriculture. Currently 7,533 Americans are serving in the Peace Corps in 71 countries — the largest number of volunteers to serve overseas since 1974. With requests for applications continuing to increase, a record number of Americans are heeding the President's Call to Service. The demand for Peace Corps volunteers overseas continues to increase, with more than 20 additional countries requesting Peace Corps programs and assistance.

The Peace Corps continues to expand programming and partnerships to develop new ways for volunteers to serve overseas and for those experiences to enhance cross-cultural awareness here in the United States.

The Peace Corps and the National Geographic Society announced a collaborative project in January 2003 that resulted in the Peace Corps' newest educational resource — a guidebook to help U.S. educators teach cross-cultural awareness. Entitled "Building Bridges: A Peace Corps Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding," the publication's goal is to spread cultural understanding and provide an opportunity for children to learn about the world through the real-life experiences of Peace Corps volunteers. The booklet has been distributed to 40,000 educators in the United States through the National Geographic Society's state-based geography alliances and an additional 9,000 booklets have been distributed by the Peace Corps partnerships with educational institutions. Millions of students will benefit from the lessons of cultural understanding and tolerance that the Peace Corps has developed throughout its 43-year history.

In a cutting-edge partnership for the African region launched in February 2003, the Peace Corps is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Agency for International Development, private-sector businesses, and the Senegalese government in the Digital Freedom Initiative. Peace Corps volunteers are initiating their involvement in teaching information technology skills to Senegalese that will enable them to apply technology to promote economic growth and opportunity.

The Peace Corps finalized several enhancements to safety and security policies and procedures during the past year. A separate Office of Safety and Security was established in 2003 to foster improved communication, coordination, oversight, and accountability for Peace Corps' safety and security efforts. The first-ever Associate Director for Safety and Security was appointed to manage this office, and the number of safety and security staff throughout the agency, domestically and overseas, was increased by 80.

APRIL 14

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) launches Earthday.gov to provide Americans with environmental service opportunities for Earth Day as well as year-round environmental activities.

APRIL 16

Interior Secretary Gale Norton launches Take Pride In America, a national partnership initiative aimed at increasing volunteer service on America's public lands.

The Peace Corps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2003. Working together, the Peace Corps and the CDC will continue to face global health challenges. Specific areas of possible collaboration include work in vaccine-preventable diseases, maternal child health, infectious diseases, chronic diseases, nutrition, reproductive health, emerging health issues, tobacco use prevention and control, injuries, occupational health, environmental health, health promotion and disease prevention, and health of displaced populations.

In September, the Peace Corps launched a national recruiting campaign to reacquaint Americans with the Peace Corps and the work of the volunteers. Centered on the theme “Life is calling. How far will you go?” the campaign underscores President Bush’s Call to Service and his goal for growing the Peace Corps.

This past year, the Peace Corps began new programs by sending volunteers to Albania, Azerbaijan, Fiji, and Chad. Additionally, in November 2003, Peace Corps signed an historic agreement with Mexico that will lead to Peace Corps volunteers serving in Mexico for the first time. The citizens of the United States and Mexico have shared culture, family connections, history, and common triumphs, and now, for the first time, Peace Corps volunteers will be a part of that tradition and history.

VOLUNTEERS FOR PROSPERITY

In May 2003, President Bush announced the creation of Volunteers for Prosperity, which taps the skills and energies of thousands of Americans interested in volunteer service overseas.

Coordinated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Volunteers for Prosperity enlists corporations and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) that mobilize highly-skilled American volunteers to help meet U.S. health and prosperity objectives abroad. Organizations that can demonstrate increased capacity to utilize skilled volunteers will be more competitive in applications for Federal grants from USAID and the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, and Health and Human Services.

During the first six months following the President’s announcement, more than 100 corporations and PVOs enrolled as participants in Volunteers for Prosperity. These organizations will also certify eligible volunteers to receive the President’s Volunteer Service Award.

Organizations, including PVOs and corporations, are placing volunteers into U.S.-sponsored health programs consistent with the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Economic growth efforts include skilled volunteers in the information technology industry, carrying out the President’s Digital Freedom Initiative in Senegal, Peru, and Indonesia. The Digital Freedom Initiative promotes economic growth by transferring the benefits of information and communication technology to entrepreneurs and small businesses in developing countries.

APRIL 25

President Bush proclaims National Volunteer Week.

APRIL 30

Citizen Corps surpasses a milestone – more than 500 Citizen Corps Councils have been formed in states and communities around the country.

AMERICORPS

A key component of the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps provides service opportunities for individuals to address critical local and national needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. In 2003, nearly 50,000 people ages 17 and older served their communities through AmeriCorps. Following the institution of administrative and financial reforms, the program received a significant increase in its 2004 budget that will support a record 75,000 members.

AmeriCorps members serve with hundreds of nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and faith-based organizations in rural and urban communities throughout the Nation. They tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, and help communities respond to disasters. Members generally commit to a full year of uninterrupted intensive service, consisting of between 20 and 40 hours a week; in exchange, AmeriCorps members earn an education award that can be used to pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back student loans.

In 2003, AmeriCorps members also focused their efforts to help meet the Nation's homeland security needs, as a number of programs specifically designated for that purpose began operations. Those efforts were above and beyond the public safety work AmeriCorps members do each year with organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In addition to the State and National grant program, AmeriCorps includes AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America), whose more than 6,000 members expand the reach and effectiveness of organizations that work to eradicate poverty. In 2003, AmeriCorps*VISTA significantly increased its outreach to organizations that mentor the children of prisoners, one of the President's 2003 State of the Union commitments. This past year, AmeriCorps*VISTA members also boosted their efforts to teach financial literacy and assist the Nation's poor in building up assets such as homes and bank accounts.

The third component of AmeriCorps is AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), a team-based, residential program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. In teams of 10 to 14, members work with nonprofit groups to provide disaster relief, preserve the environment, build homes for low-income families, tutor children, and meet other challenges. Since members are trained in mass care and can be assigned to new duties on short notice, they are particularly well-suited to meet emergency public safety needs. In 2003, AmeriCorps*NCCC members responded to 36 requests for emergency relief, including Hurricane Isabel along the mid-Atlantic coast, fires in Colorado, Wyoming and Arizona, tornadoes in Kansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Missouri, floods in Texas, Kentucky, Alabama and Tennessee, and the recovery of debris from the Space Shuttle Columbia.

MAY 1

"We the People" Forum on American History, Civics, and Service includes the inaugural National Endowment for the Humanities' "Heroes of History" lecture and First Lady Laura Bush presents "Idea of America" medals to national essay competition winners.

MAY 16

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster become a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

SENIOR CORPS

Senior Corps, another component of the Corporation for National and Community Service, provides volunteer opportunities for those age 55 years and over through three programs: RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. Senior Corps volunteers use their experience and skills to help local organizations provide a wide range of community services, such as mentoring juvenile offenders and children of prisoners, teaching English to immigrants, and providing assistance and companionship to homebound seniors. In 2003, approximately 533,000 Senior Corps volunteers served their local communities through a network of more than 1,300 projects funded by the Corporation and other sources.

Approximately 484,000 Senior Corps members served through RSVP and its network of more than 65,000 nonprofit organizations and public agencies that act as volunteer placement sites. Their activities included mentoring at-risk youth, testing drinking water for contaminants, recruiting other volunteers, coordinating blood drives, organizing Neighborhood Watch patrols, and lending their business skills to community groups. Senior Corps volunteers also worked as Foster Grandparents, serving one-on-one as mentors and positive role models to more than 280,000 children and youth with special needs, or as Senior Companions, helping more than 65,000 homebound seniors and other adults maintain independence in their own homes by preparing meals, helping with light chores, shopping for groceries, taking clients to medical appointments, and providing relief to family members and other regular caregivers.

Together, these volunteers contributed more than 118 million hours of service. In response to the President's call to focus on mentoring and supporting the children of prisoners, Senior Corps increased the number of volunteers providing mentoring, tutoring, and constructive guidance to children and youth by ten percent.

More than 55,000 Senior Corps volunteers served in 2003, with 143 local projects sponsored by faith-based organizations. In June 2003, Senior Corps released the Senior Corps Faith-Based Profile Executive Summary Report, which details the longstanding partnership between Senior Corps volunteers and faith-based organizations.

In 2003, Senior Corps responded to President Bush's challenge to expand senior service to 600,000 senior volunteers by launching the "Ask a Friend" recruitment campaign, which sends prospective volunteers to Senior Corps' web-based recruitment system. The system offers an online tool to attract, recruit, manage, and report on new volunteer numbers. This system is the only one of its kind specifically built for senior volunteer service.

MAY 19

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announces the availability of \$10 million for qualified organizations to train adult volunteers as mentors for children whose parents are incarcerated.

MAY 21

President Bush announces Volunteers for Prosperity, a new volunteer-based initiative that provides short-term, flexible volunteer opportunities for highly skilled Americans to work with non-governmental and voluntary service organizations in countries around the world.

The Corporation was the first government agency to provide grant funding specifically for volunteer service in homeland security after September 11, 2001. Through its Special Volunteer Program, administered by Senior Corps, 17 grantees were awarded funds in 2002 and 2003 to develop volunteer-based programs to support homeland security in their communities. As of the end of 2003, more than 36,800 volunteers — 40 percent are age 55 and over and 4,000 are veterans — served more than 671,000 total hours. The volunteers prepared disaster kits, helped with disaster preparedness training, assisted in mock bio-terrorism drills, conducted community outreach and education to help citizens be safer and better prepared, and helped to recruit and train more than 5,000 other volunteers. Special Volunteer Program partners included 200 chapters of the American Red Cross and 225 FEMA or emergency management agencies. In addition, special volunteers helped to establish or support more than 240 Citizen Corps Councils.

LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA

Learn and Serve America, the third main component of the Corporation for National and Community Service, provides grants to schools, colleges, and nonprofit organizations to support efforts that engage students in community service linked to academic achievement and the development of civic skills. This approach to education, called service-learning, improves communities while preparing young people for a lifetime of responsible citizenship.

Through this program, in 2003, more than one million students were engaged in service projects and activities in their communities. In addition to providing grants, Learn and Serve America serves as a resource for service and service-learning to teachers, faculty members, schools, and community groups.

During 2003, Learn and Serve America issued a new round of three-year grants to schools, colleges, and community organizations in all fifty states. Many of these grants focused on service-learning programs that specifically linked the teaching of history and civics with service. These programs add to the work that Learn and Serve America has focused on in recent years to help educators instill in students an understanding of service and civic participation as integral features of our democratic system of self-government.

MAY 27

Peace Corps commits 1,000 additional volunteers to help fight HIV/AIDS as part of the President's global AIDS relief package.

MAY 29

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announces the availability of \$19 million in grant money to train citizens to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities through local Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

CITIZEN CORPS

In less than two years, Americans have forged a citizen preparedness movement across the United States. More than 900 communities in 51 states and territories have established Citizen Corps Councils to help coordinate local emergency preparedness efforts and engage volunteers to participate in homeland security work and make our communities safer. In September 2003, Congress appropriated \$40 million through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to strengthen state and local Citizen Corps efforts. The Office for Domestic Preparedness at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has overall responsibility for implementing the Citizen Corps program.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security also created a network of 15 national nonprofit organizations and Federal government organizations that provide resources and materials for public education or training, offer volunteer service opportunities, and represent volunteers with an interest in homeland security. These volunteer groups and others participate as part of the State and local governments' Citizen Corps Councils. Together with State and local leaders — fire chiefs, police chiefs, emergency managers, and others — they formulate the plan for using community volunteers to increase the level of a community's preparedness and to offer time and talent in support of the professional emergency responders. Throughout the country, volunteers are working side by side with first responders.

Citizen Corps Councils

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which coordinates and manages the overall Citizen Corps program, has built a national network of support. The National Citizen Corps Council brings together 46 national organizations that advance the mission of first responder-citizen preparedness for all kinds of emergencies and threats. These major associations and Federal agencies have nationwide memberships representing law enforcement, fire, emergency management, emergency medical and public health services, crime prevention, volunteer groups, private sector, Federal partners, and intergovernmental organizations.

Citizen Corps Councils now serve more than one-third of the U.S. population. These councils mobilize volunteers to respond to emergencies, help develop emergency communication plans, participate in hazardous materials, chemical, and biological exercises, conduct surveys of public facilities and houses of worship for use in developing community emergency plans, help train schools on emergency procedures, provide year-round support to first responders, and educate citizens on the need to have a family plan and emergency kit as a part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "READY Campaign."

MAY 30

Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) program, a component of Citizen Corps, celebrates one-year anniversary.

JUNE 8

Points of Light Foundation becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

JUNE 10

National Safety Council becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

VIPS programs have grown from 76 registered police departments in January 2002 to more than 730 programs today, enlisting 39,000 volunteers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to aid our law enforcement officers. These volunteers enhance the capacity of State and local law enforcement by performing vital roles, such as participating in school safety patrols, assisting with filing and administrative work, providing crisis counseling to victims of crime and their families, combating auto theft, and leading crime and drug abuse prevention programs in their communities. The International Association of Chiefs of Police manages and implements VIPS on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Medical Reserve Corps

Over 5,000 volunteers, including practicing, non-practicing, and retired medical and public health professionals, are now part of the new Medical Reserve Corps. The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General has issued more than \$10 million in Federal grants, supporting 167 communities around the country. Other communities are establishing and registering Medical Reserve Corps units without Federal grant funding. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, including medical and public health professionals, serve their communities and strengthen and supplement the public health system to prepare for emergencies that threaten public health. Medical Reserve Corps units are engaging in bioterrorism response exercises, preparing for potential infectious disease outbreaks, and administering youth immunizations and flu vaccinations. The office of the U.S. Surgeon General with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has lead responsibility for the Medical Reserve Corps program.

Neighborhood Watch

Since the President's Call to Service, Neighborhood Watch programs have increased significantly. Neighborhood Watch, an effective crime prevention initiative for more than 30 years, is experiencing a renewal across the country. Neighborhood Watch is encouraging Americans to take responsibility for the safety and security of their communities. Neighborhood Watch is managed and implemented by the National Sheriffs' Association with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice.

JUNE 16

The National Endowment for the Humanities announces the first "We the People" grants, and awards more than 65 grants to institutions and individuals across the country to enhance and encourage research, scholarship, preservation efforts, and educational programs to enhance public understanding of American history.

JUNE 18

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security hosts Citizen Corps Conference for major U.S. cities in New York City.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training

CERT training has grown from 170 teams in 28 states and territories to more than 850 teams in 51 states and territories. CERT provides citizens 20 hours of training on disaster preparedness, basic disaster operations, fire safety, light search and rescue, and basic first aid. CERT teams throughout the country have been active in supporting local emergency responders following a number of recent disasters including tornadoes in Kansas, wildfires in the west, Hurricane Isabel in Virginia and the District of Columbia, and flooding in Washington state. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has responsibility for the CERT program.

Building Support for Lasting Change

BUSINESS STRENGTHENING AMERICA

While the business community has long been committed to philanthropic activities, never before has corporate America joined together in a national effort to encourage and increase employee engagement in volunteer service.

In response to the President's Call to Service, a diverse group of American business leaders came together to create Business Strengthening America, a non-partisan, peer-to-peer effort to engage industry and community leaders in a campaign to encourage civic engagement and volunteer service in the workplace.

These companies share a core belief: an increased commitment to volunteering and civic responsibility builds a stronger society and will enable businesses to "do well by doing good" because it deepens employee, consumer, and shareholder relationships.

Since the launch of Business Strengthening America in December 2002, more than 750 businesses representing more than 5.2 million employees have joined as members.

Member companies are working to increase the number of businesses making long-term changes in their companies' practices to engage employees in service activities, increase the effectiveness of workplace volunteer efforts, improve volunteer partnerships between businesses, community service organizations and local communities, and issue a report on the impact of the business community's contributions to service and civic engagement.

Business Strengthening America has facilitated a wide range of ongoing volunteer activities, is implementing a peer-to-peer advisory program, and is creating an in-depth volunteer service and civic engagement toolkit.

JUNE 21

American Radio Relay League becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

JUNE 25

Senior Corps launches "Ask a Friend, Share Your Volunteer Spirit" campaign to recruit 100,000 additional volunteers.

JUNE

Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez urges graduates to consider public service during commencement addresses.

STUDENTS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA

Launched in September 2002, the Students in Service to America initiative engages America's youth in volunteer activities, while helping them develop habits of service and civic participation that will last a lifetime. The Students in Service to America website and guidebook assist elementary, middle and high schools, after-school programs, home schoolers, volunteer centers, and other organizations with developing service and service-learning programs.

Volunteer centers use the guidebook as a resource in training sessions, funding proposals, and publications, and as an introduction to service for K-12 school staff, community-based organizations, and groups of young people. The guidebook is also used to facilitate discussions at meetings and conferences on youth service and service-learning. The Students in Service to America guidebook and CD-ROM were developed through a collaboration of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the U.S. Department of Education, the Points of Light Foundation, the Volunteer Center National Network, and the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

JULY 3

USA Freedom Corps launches "How I Spent My Summer" to mobilize Americans of all ages to volunteer during the summer months and help meet community needs.

JULY 10

President Bush meets with Peace Corps volunteers in Botswana.

A Foundation for Service by Teaching American History and Civics

In September 2002, President Bush announced a new series of policies and initiatives to help Americans of all ages, particularly our young people, enhance their civic knowledge and develop a better understanding of our democratic traditions and institutions.

The USA Freedom Corps is working to implement several core initiatives through our collaboration with the following programs.

WE THE PEOPLE

In September 2002, President Bush announced his intention to request \$100 million over three years for the National Endowment for the Humanities' (NEH) "We the People" initiative. "We the People," developed in conjunction with the USA Freedom Corps, aims to enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of American history by providing grants to the best scholarship, research, public programs, preservation efforts, and education initiatives, as selected through NEH's rigorous peer-review process. This past year, the NEH has awarded over 100 grants to universities, teachers, scholars, curators, documentary film-makers, and conservators to develop efforts to enhance understanding of American history and disseminate that knowledge across the country. Additionally, as part of the "We the People" initiative, the NEH launched its inaugural "Heroes of History" lecture and "Idea of America" Essay Contest for high school juniors.

The NEH also created a new grant competition for "Landmarks of American History" where high school teachers can study with noted scholars at a historic site — such as battlefields and presidential homes. Seminars and workshops will begin in the summer of 2004.

Ten million dollars in new funds appropriated for FY 2004 will help support and expand these programs and other projects to encourage scholars, teachers, filmmakers, curators, and librarians to explore significant events and themes in American history and advance knowledge of the ideas, ideals, and institutions that define America.

JULY 29

American Red Cross, the Environmental Protection Agency, Local Emergency Planning Committees, the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools become Citizen Corps Affiliates.

JULY 30

Volunteers In Police Service program becomes active in all 50 states and Washington D.C., a five-fold increase in one year.

OUR DOCUMENTS / THE PEOPLE'S VOTE

A collaborative effort between the USA Freedom Corps, the National Archives, and National History Day developed "Our Documents," a resource book of 100 milestone documents that helped shape our nation's history. More than 40,000 secondary school teachers used these teaching resources to help instruct their students.

On Constitution Day, September 17, 2003, an updated resource book was made available to coincide with the announcement of "The People's Vote: 100 Documents that Shaped America." "The People's Vote" encouraged Americans of all ages to participate in a national vote on the ten most influential documents in American history. This exercise challenged Americans to a lively and thoughtful debate about which documents in American history are the most influential — which changed the course of history, shaped the United States, and defined us as a people. The results of "The People's Vote" were revealed on Bill of Rights Day, December 15, 2003, in a ceremony at the National Archives. Participants selected the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Louisiana Purchase as the four most significant documents in our nation's history. Over 175,000 people cast their ballots for "The People's Vote."

TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY GRANTS

In September 2003, the U.S. Department of Education announced that 114 school districts in 38 States were to receive \$99 million in Teaching of American History Grants. As part of No Child Left Behind, the grants provide funding to support three-year projects to improve teachers' knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for traditional American history through intensive, ongoing professional development. Under this program, the U.S. Department of Education awards grants to local educational agencies working in partnership with organizations that have extensive knowledge of American history, including libraries, museums, nonprofit history or humanities organizations, and higher education institutions. Congress has appropriated \$119 million for this program in 2004.

WHITE HOUSE FORUM ON AMERICAN HISTORY, CIVICS, AND SERVICE

In May 2003, the USA Freedom Corps, together with the NEH, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service, coordinated a "White House Forum on American History, Civics, and Service." The forum brought together leaders from K-12 schools, universities, Federal and State government, museums, and historic sites to call public attention to the need for more effective history and civics education.

JULY 30

Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge speaks to state Citizen Corps leaders, volunteer organizations, and first responders during the 2003 Annual Citizen Corps Conference in Washington, D.C.

AUGUST 21

The International Association of Fire Chiefs and Citizen Corps become partners and pledge mutual support.

Mentoring

In January 2003, President Bush proposed an initiative to mentor disadvantaged youth who are making the critical transition from childhood to adolescence. The two components of the President's mentoring initiative include a three-year program to provide new mentors to disadvantaged students during their middle school years and a three-year program to provide 100,000 mentors to children whose parents are in prison.

SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING

The President's goal of providing mentors to at-risk young people is being achieved by providing support to nationally-affiliated mentoring programs, as well as independent community and faith-based organizations that are well-positioned to serve the target population.

The goal of the school-based mentoring initiative is to address the academic and social needs of the Nation's most at-risk youth by strengthening school-based mentoring programs that target these young people in middle schools and provide them with one-on-one mentors. The initiative supports the development, expansion, and strengthening of exemplary mentoring programs targeted at disadvantaged middle school youth through grants from the U.S. Department of Education. Congress has appropriated \$50 million for these efforts in FY 2004.

MENTORING CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

This initiative to mentor children of prisoners builds the capacity of existing and new programs to provide 100,000 new mentors over a three-year period. In 2003, 52 grantees in 29 states were selected to receive approximately nine million dollars to support mentoring in the first year. Fifty million dollars is available for mentoring children of prisoners in FY 2004.

Community and faith-based organizations that work with these children in a variety of settings including schools, community organizations, and prisons are eligible to apply for funds. These local programs ensure that volunteer mentors are screened, trained, supported, and monitored. They also screen eligible children, arrange appropriate mentor-child matches, and evaluate outcomes for each participating child. The Department of Health and Human Services administers the grant program to support mentoring service providers.

AUGUST 26

Civil Air Patrol becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

AUGUST 27

Veterans of Foreign Wars becomes a Citizen Corps Affiliate.

AUGUST 30

Citizen Corps surpasses a milestone – more than 750 state and local Citizen Corps Councils established around the country.

On the Homefront

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Defense, the USA Freedom Corps introduced “On the Homefront” in March 2003. This new initiative provides opportunities for Americans to support our men and women in uniform and their families.

Sending letters of support and care packages to our troops overseas, offering assistance to family members who are at home, and volunteering in the place of military personnel who are away from home are the three main ways citizens have been encouraged to participate.

To help Americans take advantage of these opportunities, the USA Freedom Corps tapped into existing organizations and initiatives such as sending emails to troops through “Operation Dear Abby,” signing an online card with “Defend America,” or mailing a care package through the United Service Organizations.

Interested citizens are also referred to local community service organizations, which in turn put them in contact with military family members here at home who need assistance with child care, household repairs, tutoring, and specialized skills. Organizations involved with “On the Homefront” include the American Legion, American Red Cross, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, BPO Elks of the USA, Camp Fire USA, National 4-H Headquarters, National Fraternal Congress of America, The Salvation Army, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and YMCA of the USA.

Organizations that benefit from the volunteer service of military men and women who are now serving overseas are in need of replacement volunteers. As a part of “On the Homefront,” Americans were encouraged to step up their efforts to volunteer and stand in the gap.

SEPTEMBER 4

All 50 Miss America state title holders earn President’s Volunteer Service Award.

SEPTEMBER 17

President Bush unveils Nation’s founding documents at National Archives. National Archivist of the United States John Carlin announces “The People’s Vote: 100 Documents That Shaped America.”

Take Pride in America

In April 2003, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Gale A. Norton, in response to President Bush's Call to Service, re-introduced Take Pride in America. Take Pride in America leads efforts to increase awareness about our public lands and encourage citizen stewardship of our parks, forests, refuges, recreation areas, and other historic and natural treasures. In 2003, there were more than 100 Take Pride in America events, involving more than 10,000 people.

Take Pride in America is working to increase the number of volunteers dramatically by expanding participation among youth, senior citizens, Hispanic-Americans, African-Americans, and faith-based and non-governmental organizations. A partnership effort among Federal, State, and local governments, as well as community and civic organizations, conservation and youth groups, and corporations, Take Pride in America also emphasizes service to inner city and urban sites, such as parks, trails, historic monuments, and playgrounds. The new Take Pride in America program is recruiting more volunteers to work on projects that will improve our public lands and plans to more than double the existing 200,000 volunteers who are already at work improving and enhancing our natural resources.

More than 100 charter partners — including major corporations, conservation groups, service organizations, and trade associations — have signed on to help.

Take Pride in America features a bipartisan Council of Governors, chaired by Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne and Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano. Nearly 40 Governors are participating and have appointed liaisons to work with the national Take Pride in America Office. Through these liaisons, Federal and State land managers can work to identify volunteer opportunities and enlist public service commitments from citizens. Each State is working to sponsor and support Take Pride events during 2004 with their local community groups and officials.

SEPTEMBER 25

President Bush signs an executive order directing the Departments of State, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Agency for International Development to establish offices to manage the Volunteers for Prosperity initiative.

OCTOBER 1

President Bush signs Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, providing \$40 million for Citizen Corps.

Soldiers in the Armies of Compassion

MEASURING VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

In December 2003, for the second consecutive year, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released data that measured the number of Americans, aged 16 and older, who engage in volunteer service activities. Those who responded to the survey participated with organizations such as schools, nonprofits, houses of worship, hospitals, and other community service organizations.

Both the number of volunteers and the volunteer rate rose between September 2002 and September 2003. About 63.8 million people did volunteer work during the twelve-month period, up from 59.8 million for the similar period ended in September 2002. The percentage of the American population that volunteered increased to 28.8 percent, up from 27.4 percent the previous twelve-month period.

These findings also indicate a number of insights, including how much time people dedicated to volunteer service. Volunteers spent a median of 52 hours on volunteer activities during the measured period of time. Forty-four percent of those who volunteered reported they did so because they were asked. Among the different age categories of volunteers, teenagers showed the greatest increases in volunteer service.

This significant increase in the number of volunteers and volunteer rate show a strengthening of America's civil society.

Since the President issued his Call to Service, one of the goals of the USA Freedom Corps has been to measure the impact of efforts to engage more Americans in volunteer service. Although sociologists have measured decreasing levels of civic participation over the past three decades, and organizations have worked to measure volunteer service trends, there is a well-recognized need for a reliable national measure of volunteer activity.

The volunteer service indicator creates a new standard for evaluating on an annual basis long-term changes in volunteer activity according to a rigorous objective standard.

This indicator is an annual national measurement of volunteer activities developed by the Census Bureau, BLS, and the USA Freedom Corps. The Census Bureau collected the data through a supplement to the September 2003 Current Population Survey conducted for the BLS to establish the number of Americans engaged in volunteer service. That survey includes approximately 60,000 households nationally, and is designed to represent the civilian, non-institutional population of the United States.

OCTOBER 14

The National Crime Prevention Council becomes a Citizen Corps affiliate.

OCTOBER 21

U.S. expands Digital Freedom Initiative to Indonesia and Peru.

OCTOBER 23

Volunteers in Police Service releases the document, "Volunteer Programs: Enhancing Public Safety by Leveraging Resources."

Current plans include the collection of volunteer service indicator data in September 2004, and in subsequent years. The volunteer service indicator will allow evaluation of efforts to engage more Americans in volunteer service. The USA Freedom Corps is providing this data to nonprofit and community organizations, foundations, corporations, academics, and the general public to help them understand trends in volunteer service and to use this information to stimulate more Americans to answer the President's Call to Service.

PRESIDENT BUSH PERSONALLY RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Americans are volunteering in every region of the country and in nearly every part of the world. Over the past two years, President Bush has met with more than 220 individuals during travels to 40 states to recognize and thank those Americans who are answering the Call to Service by devoting their time and talents to helping others.

During a trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2003, President Bush met with Edward and Jane Bardon. Edward, age 70, and Jane, age 68, were preparing to travel to Turkmenistan to begin their two-year service as Peace Corps volunteers where they will work in the area of health education. Turkmenistan is one of several countries that have re-opened Peace Corps programs since the President's Call to Service. The Bardons had previously volunteered overseas, teaching English as a second language in Russia and Romania.

Proving that young people can make a difference too, the President had the opportunity to meet with Phuong Nguyen in Denver, Colorado. Phuong is an active volunteer with the American Red Cross Youth Corps, a partnership program between the Mile High Chapter of the American Red Cross and Denver-area high schools. As part of the American Red Cross Youth Corps program, Phuong joined other area high school students to implement different service projects that helped address a need in her community. These service projects included graffiti removal and mural painting at her school, coordinating a gift exchange between seniors in a nearby nursing home and children at a daycare facility, and creating a field day for elementary students to promote health and fitness.

In Detroit, Michigan, President Bush met with Walter J. Piper. Since 1990, Walter has been an active volunteer with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration, where he serves as an advisor and counselor to small business owners and individuals interested in starting a new business. As a SCORE volunteer, Walter offers advice on management, financing, sales, marketing, and business strategy. For the past 12 years, Walter has also volunteered with the Oakland County Literacy Council where he teaches English as a second language to Detroit area residents.

OCTOBER 30

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services delivers more than \$8 million in grant money to 167 communities around the country to strengthen new and established Medical Reserve Corps units.

NOVEMBER 3

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announces approximately \$35 million in direct grants to states for the Citizen Corps program.

Through everyday acts of kindness and decency, these volunteers play an important role in our communities and set a fine example for our Nation. By mentoring a child, caring for the elderly, bringing hope to someone with a broken spirit, or volunteering to preserve our natural resources, Americans have shown that our country's greatest strength is the compassion of our people. President Bush will continue to recognize volunteers as he travels around the country and will encourage more Americans to engage in volunteer service.

SURVEY ON THE CAPACITY OF THE VOLUNTEER INFRASTRUCTURE OF LOCAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

In April 2003, the USA Freedom Corps and the Corporation for National and Community Service announced their collaboration on a new nationwide study that will measure and evaluate the capacity of America's nonprofit sector to utilize volunteer service in meeting vital community needs. The capacity survey is designed to assess the capacity of the nonprofit sector to utilize volunteers effectively and efficiently to address local community needs and provide meaningful service opportunities for citizens who volunteer. This assessment will provide the first meaningful baseline measurement of the capacity of the nonprofit sector to utilize volunteers. Results will be announced in February 2004.

The study, which is being conducted by the Urban Institute, will provide nonprofit organizations across the country with valuable information that will help strengthen and expand their ability to use the time and skills of volunteers to make an effective and meaningful impact in America's communities.

This survey will yield significant and valuable data that will help stimulate activity on a range of issues focused on increasing the capacity of local nonprofit organizations. The study will help the USA Freedom Corps' efforts to engage more Americans in volunteer service to their communities.

DECEMBER 4

Business Strengthening America recognizes its one-year anniversary featuring remarks from President Bush, and U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Don Evans honors businesses with Corporate Stewardship Award.

DECEMBER 17

Bureau of Labor Statistics releases Volunteer Service Indicator study.

DECEMBER 18

First Peace Corps volunteers in Azerbaijan begin work.

Conclusion

President George W. Bush founded the USA Freedom Corps in 2002 to give Americans a chance to participate in making their neighborhoods, communities, and the world a better place. The response has been remarkable.

In 2003, millions more Americans volunteered their time and donated their efforts to help improve their country and the world.

As President Bush said, “My call to our fellow Americans is, love a neighbor. When you find somebody who hurts, put your arm around them. Mentor a child. Go see shut-ins. Tell somebody you love them on a daily basis. America can and will change, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, thanks to the soldiers in the armies of compassion.”

As we look to the opportunities and work that lies ahead in 2004, every American has a role to play. Everyone can do something. To help foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility for decades to come, visit: www.USAFreedomCorps.gov or call 1-877-USA-CORPS.

DECEMBER 20

President Bush focuses on USA Freedom Corps and volunteer service during weekly national radio address.

DECEMBER 30

Citizen Corps surpasses milestone — more than 1,000 Citizen Corps Councils have been formed in states and communities around the country.

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WWW.USAFREEDOMCORPS.GOV