

THE USA FREEDOM CORPS' 

# Network of Service

June 2003

## Citizen Corps Helping to Make Communities Safer



President Bush encourages Americans to join Citizen Corps during a visit to Knoxville, TN.

On June 18, the Department of Homeland Security hosted 17 large U.S. cities at the first annual Citizen Corps Mega-Cities Conference to address the unique issues facing large metropolitan areas in using Citizen Corps and its programs to engage community volunteers and organizations in emergency preparedness and planning.

"Thanks to President Bush's vision, every citizen volunteer can take an active role in preparing his or her city or community to be more secure and better able to respond to disasters of all kinds," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

**Citizen Corps**, now a part of the new Department of Homeland Security, is a community-based initiative to engage citizens in homeland security and community preparedness through public education and outreach, and volunteer training, recruitment and engagement.

President Bush launched Citizen Corps as part of the USA Freedom Corps on January 30, 2002. Since then, **694 state and local Citizen Corps Councils** have been established.

Citizen Corps programs include:

➤ Through **Volunteers in Police Service** (VIPS), 22,000 citizens are

assisting state and local agencies to allow law enforcement professionals more time for frontline duty. There are more than 525 VIPS programs across the U.S., a four-fold increase since the President issued his Call to Service. VIPS is sponsored by the Department of Justice.

➤ In 42 communities nationwide, health care professionals and others can volunteer during emergencies and to address ongoing public health needs through **Medical Reserve Corps** (MRC) units. The Department of Health and Human Services, which sponsors MRC, is awarding grant funds to start up additional MRC units. (See box below.)

➤ The Department of Justice's **Neighborhood Watch** has expanded its mission of crime prevention to include terrorism awareness and disaster preparedness. The initiative has already reached 72% of its two-year goal to double the number of neighborhood-based programs.

➤ Through FEMA's **Community Emergency Response Team** (CERT), citizens can receive training in basic disaster response skills and take a more active role in emergency preparedness. FEMA has provided \$35 million to state and local governments to provide CERT training over the last two years.

### Medical Reserve Corps Grant Funds Available

*The Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) has announced the availability of \$6 million in grant funds for community-based organizations for "Demonstration Projects for the Medical Reserve Corps." The OSG anticipates making 120 awards of up to \$50,000 to new applicant communities in FY03. Grant applications are due on July 18. [Click here for details.](#)*

### June Highlights

On June 13, more than 300 travel and tourism industry professionals worked together to help restore Ellis Island. The clean-up project was the inaugural effort of **Tourism Caring for America** (TCA), a volunteer program launched by the tourism industry to help preserve, conserve and protect tourism-related sites in America that need rejuvenation. TCA was founded by the Travelers Conservation Foundation in response to President Bush's Call to Service. TCA is a national program and intends to roll out conservation projects like the Ellis Island cleanup to all 50 states during 2004. [Click here for details.](#)

On June 24, Senior Corps launched "**Ask a Friend**," a nationwide campaign to tap the experience, skills, and talents of volunteers over 55 to meet a wide range of community challenges. Ask a Friend is searching for 100,000 new volunteers age 55 and over to help make a difference in America's communities. [Click here for details.](#)

On June 9, the Department of Defense joined Defend America, one of the participating organizations in "**On the Homefront**," to launch "**Tribute to Freedom**" for Americans to show their continuing appreciation and support for our nation's military men and women. [Click here for details.](#) "**On the Homefront**" is a joint initiative of the USA Freedom Corps and the Department of Defense to help Americans looking for ways to support the troops and their families. [Click here for details.](#)