



Rancho Santa Fe
FOUNDATION
PROMOTING PHILANTHROPY SINCE 1981

THE VALUE OF A VOLUNTEER

Volunteerism is not a 21st century concept. In fact, people have been volunteering for centuries ... simple acts of kindness that are done from the heart, and with passion, and not because they will be compensated monetarily. Albert Camus, 20th century French philosopher and Nobel Prize recipient for literature once said, “Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile”.

Our country has been called to service – United We Serve – is a national program, endorsed by The White House and Congress, challenging all Americans to volunteer this summer and be part of building a new foundation for America. But volunteerism should not end on Labor Day. It is a way of life, which can bring great benefit to struggling nonprofits whose very existence may be hanging in the balance, and to those who render service.

Independent Sector, a Washington D.C. leadership forum for charities, foundations, and corporate giving programs is committed to advancing the common good in America and around the world. In April they announced that the 2008 estimate for the value of a volunteer hour is \$20.25, an increase from \$19.51 per hour in 2007. Attracting an increased volunteer force during challenging economic times, can add significantly to the bottom line.

Volunteer opportunities abound in the region; Kids Korps USA was founded in 1994 by Joani Wafer and her sister Dawn Lehman. The inspiration for founding Kids Korps USA came from a desire to make children more aware of their environments and provide them with opportunities to contribute to the positive welfare of their communities. Kids Korps USA operates on the premise that volunteering encourages children to care about the world around them, and thus has a positive influence on the shaping of their lives. Mobilizing children to give something back helps their communities and the kids themselves, boosting their self-esteem and combating boredom - two of the biggest factors, experts say, in reducing youth violence. Given the right opportunities and strong, positive leadership, our youth discover their talents and skills to help others in their community. This has become a lifelong learning experience for the Kids Korps grads. Go to www.kidskorps.org for more information.

Summer 2009 saw the inception of the Summer Volunteer Academy at the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation. Twelve college and high school students will be completing a minimum of 10

volunteer hours at regional organizations, performing services such as working with severely handicapped and autistic children through San Diego Adaptive Sports Foundation and T.E.R.I and work at the San Diego Food Bank. We are looking forward to a future collaboration with Kids Korps USA for these summer programs. There is still time to participate – www.rsffoundation.org.

There are opportunities for families through Volunteer San Diego, easily accessible from their website at www.volunteersandiego.org.

Many people in our country are feeling “strapped” as a result of diminished cash resources and thus we are seeing less personal philanthropy as a result of corporate affluence. But these same individuals possess many resources that can be valuable to the nonprofits that they have supported in the past. Nonprofits can use people who can offer consulting, management, technology and program support, as well as a myriad of administrative services. Just because you aren’t writing checks, does not mean you cannot continue to support your non-for-profit partners.

We encourage everyone to get out ... get involved!