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VOLUNTEER FLORIDA HONORS THREE WITH PRESIDENT'S CALL TO SERVICE AWARDS

*Prestigious National Honor for Volunteer Service to be presented at
Volunteer Florida's quarterly Commission meeting. ...*

SARASOTA – The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Volunteer Florida, today announced it will award **three** volunteers with the **PRESIDENT'S CALL TO SERVICE AWARD**, the highest national honor offered in recognition of volunteer service and a part of the **PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD** program. To qualify for the **PRESIDENT'S CALL TO SERVICE AWARD**, volunteers must have logged a minimum of **4,000 volunteer hours** over the course of their lifetimes.

The **AWARDS** will be presented at Volunteer Florida's quarterly Commission meeting, to be held Monday, April 30 at the Sarasota Ritz-Carlton Hotel, located at 1111 Ritz-Carlton Drive. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. Eastern time, and the **AWARDS** will be presented at approximately 9:30 a.m.

The outstanding volunteers who will receive this award are:

- **Brother William Geenan**, of Sarasota, founder of the Senior Friendship Center, which today has an annual budget of \$12 million, and provides the same programs that 16 distinct nonprofits provide in other communities.
- **Mr. Tom Giles**, of Sarasota, has helped provide leadership and programs to support low-income communities over the past 10 years and has been instrumental in the growth of the Friendship Volunteer Center.
- **Ms. Carl Stephens**, of the Newtown Community, has been instrumental in getting her neighborhood prepared for disasters and organizing local African-American churches to be mini points of distribution after disasters occur.

(more)



“These recipients of the PRESIDENT’S CALL TO SERVICE AWARD are role models for all Americans,” said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. “Each volunteer hour contributed makes a difference in improving the quality of life for others. Through their extraordinary commitment, these volunteers have brought us closer together as families, as communities and as a Nation.”

Established in 2003, the PRESIDENT’S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD – WHICH IS MODELED AFTER THE PRESIDENT’S PHYSICAL FITNESS AWARD – is available on an annual basis to individuals, groups and families who have met or exceeded requirements for volunteer service and have demonstrated exemplary citizenship through volunteering. As a Leadership Organization participating in the AWARD program, **Volunteer Florida** confers the AWARDS to recognize the outstanding achievements of volunteers throughout Florida.

“In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush created the USA Freedom Corps, and called on every American to make a lifelong commitment to volunteer service. The PRESIDENT’S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD recognizes individuals and families who have answered that call,” said Spencer.

The PRESIDENT’S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD is an award for volunteer service that every American – from every age and every walk of life – can aspire to achieve. To be eligible to receive the AWARD, individuals, families and groups submit a record of their annual volunteer service hours to participating organizations, such as **Volunteer Florida**, that will verify the service and deliver the AWARD. AWARD eligibility for individuals and groups is based upon hour requirements varying by age.

The AWARD is issued by the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation, a group created by President Bush to recognize the valuable contributions volunteers are making to our nation. Chaired by Case Foundation President **Jean Case**, the Council is comprised of leaders in government, media, entertainment, business, education, nonprofits, and the volunteer sector. Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer, who is an appointee to the Council, will present the awards on behalf of the Council.

For more information on volunteering in Florida, please visit www.volunteerflorida.org.

For more information about how to qualify for the PRESIDENT’S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD, please visit www.PresidentialServiceAwards.gov or call 1-866-545-5307.

The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youth to seniors to people with disabilities; promotes volunteerism for disaster preparedness and response; and helps to strengthen and expand Volunteer Centers in Florida.

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