

## **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) CITIZEN CORPS NEWS – April 23, 2009**

### **President Barack Obama Signs Legislation to Establish Anniversary of 9/11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance**

- **9/11 Once Again Inspires a Call to Service**
- **Founders of 9/11 Day of Service Attend Bill Signing Ceremony in Washington, DC**

WASHINGTON, D.C.– On Tuesday, April 21, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which for the first time includes federal authorization to establish September 11 as an annually recognized National Day of Service and Remembrance.

“Today President Barack Obama created a historic, enduring and compassionate legacy that truly honors the 9/11 victims and their families, first responders and rescue and recovery workers, the soldiers who have taken up arms to defend our freedom and safety, and the many volunteers who spontaneously contributed their efforts in the immediate aftermath of 9/11,” said David Paine, founder and president of MyGoodDeed.org, the nonprofit group that led a seven-year campaign to formally establish 9/11 as an annually recognized day of service and remembrance. “There isn’t a better or more fitting way to remember 9/11 than for all of us as Americans to voluntarily set aside time on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks to help others in need.”

“As a 9/11 family member, I cannot think of more inspiring, appropriate and constructive tribute to my late brother and all those who perished, were injured or rose in service – to rekindle at least for one day each year the remarkable spirit of compassion and service that unified our country,” said MyGoodDeed.org co-founder and vice president Jay S. Winuk, whose younger brother Glenn J. Winuk, an attorney, volunteer firefighter and EMT, died in the line of duty in the collapse of the World Trade Center. “This groundbreaking national service legislation will greatly benefit the nation in so many meaningful ways as we face these challenging times.”

Paine and Winuk were among a select group of service sector leaders, government officials and other dignitaries who attended today’s ceremony at the SEED School in Washington, D.C. to witness President Obama signing into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act.

#### A New Catalyst for Volunteerism

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and U. S. Rep. Peter King (R-Long Island) both worked closely with the sponsors of the Serve America Act in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to draft and include language to establish 9/11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

“I could not be more proud to work to pass this important provision,” said U.S. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), who joined with U.S. Representative Peter King (R-Long Island) in first proposing to Congress back in 2004 that 9/11 should be designated a national day of service. “September 11 should not only be a day for mourning – it should be a day to think about our neighbors, our community and our country. We can take a tragic day in our nation’s history and turn it into a force for good.”

“I have been active in seeking a service day for years,” said Rep. King. “America came together in the aftermath of 9/11, reminding us what it truly means to be part of this great nation. By making 9/11 a national day of service, that same spirit of giving will continue in a day of remembrance, unity and selflessness.”

“We greatly appreciate Senator Schumer’s, Congressman King’s and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s tireless dedication to this cause, as well as the support we received from

Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), and Representatives George Miller (D-Calif.), Carolyn McCarthy (D-Calif.) and Buck McKeon (R-Calif.), all of whom joined together to include the 9/11 Day of Service in this important national service legislation,” Winuk said.

Under the new law, the anniversary of 9/11 would be observed annually in ways somewhat similar to Martin Luther King Jr. Day, although it intentionally will not be a federal holiday. “We do not wish to see it ever become a state or federally designated day off,” said Paine. “Instead, we hope that individuals, businesses and organizations will be inspired on their own to voluntarily engage in community service, perform good deeds of any nature, and participate in other private and organized activities in remembrance of the events of 9/11.”

To support this observance, the new legislation authorizes the Corporation for National and Community Service, which oversees federal national service programs, to make grants and provide other assistance to community nonprofits and other groups that want to organize 9/11 service and remembrance activities.

“Our hope is to organize the single largest day of service in U.S. history on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11,” said Paine, referring to September 11, 2011, just two and a half years away. “Though millions of people already support the MyGoodDeed.org initiative by engaging in charitable service each 9/11, we realize it will take some time to build widespread awareness of this formal observance. We are very confident, however, that the 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance will ultimately play a very significant role in energizing volunteerism in America, while also bringing a sense of national healing to one of the worst human tragedies in U.S. history.”

MyGoodDeed.org is a 501c(3) charitable organization based in New York. Each year MyGoodDeed.org organizes activities that encourage individuals and organizations to set aside time on the anniversary of 9/11 to perform simple acts of good deeds and service that help others in need. Since the initiative began as a grassroots movement, more than one million people have visited the MyGoodDeed.org Web site, from all 50 states and 170 countries, with many posting their plans to perform good deeds and service projects on 9/11. It’s many affiliates and partners include the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Citizen Corps, Points of Light/HandsOn Network, Youth Service America, and others prominent groups. Visit <http://www.mygooddeed.org/>.

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