

## **Points of Light, GE Volunteers and the Corporation for National and Community Service Bring Communities Together to Honor the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Through Volunteer Service**

ATLANTA, Jan. 14, 2015 /3BL Media/ – Points of Light, with support from GE Volunteers and the Corporation for National and Community Service; and in partnership with nonprofits and hundreds of local volunteer action centers, will mark the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, Jan. 18, by mobilizing more than 200,000 volunteers across the country in service projects and discussions of critical community issues.

Businesses, community leaders, parents, youth, educators and everyday citizens can connect to meaningful service opportunities through AllforGood.org, Points of Light's digital hub for volunteerism and community service, where more than 700 nonprofit organizations have posted 80,000 volunteer slots.

Volunteers may also access a free Cooking and Conversations Guide to help spark face-to-face conversations through America's Sunday Supper community events. America's Sunday Suppers – inspired by Dr. King's vision of people from diverse backgrounds interacting on personal levels – encourage people to share a meal and discuss issues that affect their communities such as race and diversity, community health and resilience and access to education and jobs resources.

In Philadelphia, Global Citizen is leading a record-breaking, tri-state volunteer initiative that includes 1,800 service projects spanning across three states: New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. (Learn more.) In Atlanta, Hands On Atlanta is hosting an America's Sunday Supper and is training volunteers to help Atlanta public school students build literacy skills through MLK Reading Days. (Learn more.)

"As we prepare to celebrate the life and contributions of Dr. King, I can think of no better way to honor his legacy than by serving together to strengthen our communities," said Tracy Hoover, CEO of Points of Light. "Volunteerism and conversations, like those encouraged through Sunday Suppers, have the power to bring people together across all that divides us and to create lasting change – something we need now more than ever."

### **Recognizing Volunteers**

Volunteer recognition is an important part of MLK Day celebrations across the nation. Points of Light is honoring Alvin Irby, founder of the New York-based Barbershop Books program, with a Daily Point of Light Award on Jan. 18. Irby's community-based literacy program creates child-friendly reading spaces in barbershops in New York City for boys ages 4-8.

Points of Light will also team up with the Corporation for National and Community Service to continue the tradition of the MLK Drum Majors for Service award, which provides organizations the opportunity to recognize outstanding volunteers who have performed extraordinary everyday acts of service and individuals who have met the hourly requirements for the President's Volunteer Service Award.

### **Volunteers Unite Across the Country**

With a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, Points of Light is supporting MLK Day volunteer activities run by 13 nonprofits, including Global Citizen and Hands On Atlanta (mentioned above), that will engage more than 50,000 volunteers across the country. Here are highlights of those and other projects happening over the weekend and on the holiday:

- Volunteer Center of Greensboro in North Carolina will organize a Community Resource Fair with 25 nonprofits providing support services to low-income families as well as sharing financial resources available to them, with nearly 10,000 volunteers in action. Learn more.
- New York Cares will host service projects across two locations in New York City, involving educational enrichment and recreation for students, socialization for seniors and the revitalization of public spaces. Learn more.
- City Year New York will mobilize 700 volunteers in New York City with a Community Resource Fair, engaging in civic discussions and hands-on service projects, including painting inspirational murals and creating care packages for cancer patients. Learn more.
- LA's Promise will host a two-day MLK Empowerment Summit in Los Angeles, giving community members the ability to learn about local economic opportunities, while also enjoying community activities and dialogue. Learn more.
- The Jewish Coalition for Literacy in San Francisco will train volunteers to read with students in an effort to develop enthusiasm for reading; meanwhile, parents will learn techniques to foster literacy at home. Learn more.
- Boys & Girls of Santa Monica volunteers in California will reflect on Dr. King's life while painting murals and cleaning up a local residential community. Learn more.
- The Service Collaborative of Western New York in Buffalo will engage 400 AmeriCorps members, students and community volunteers in a large-scale community food drive in support of 1,000 local military families. Learn more.
- Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz volunteers in California will assist veterans and people recently impacted by the justice system to develop resumes, prepare for job interviews and improve their financial literacy. Learn more.
- The Youth Policy Institute will conduct a Professional Development Day in Los Angeles – providing resources to help residents find jobs. An estimated 150 volunteers will support workshops ranging from resume writing to mock interviews. Learn more.
- HandsOn Northwest North Carolina will host the annual MLK Read-In – during which children are paired with volunteer “reading buddies” – sharing the importance of reading and building relationships across communities. Learn more.
- Be More in Detroit will host the Dr. King Day Summit – Stepping Up to Fulfill the Dream, which includes a brunch creating dialogue among community leaders. Service projects will commence in the weeks following the summit. Learn more.
- Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC/DC) in Washington, D.C., which offers occupational skills training and job placement for opportunity youth and disconnected adults, will host a project during which volunteers will pack “job-readiness” kits and improve the OIC/DC facility, located on a boulevard named for Dr. King in the Anacostia neighborhood. Learn more.

Scores of other volunteer action centers will activate volunteers in partnership with Points of Light's programs and divisions during the King Holiday. Here are some highlights of these events:

generationOn, Points of Light's youth division, will host a youth summit on Jan. 18 in New York City, bringing together 20 teens from local generationOn Service Clubs to network, learn leadership skills and participate in a group service project hosted by New York Cares. generationOn has also developed resource materials, including project guides, a fact sheet and lesson plans to support youth in service on or around the King holiday.

ServiceWorks (powered by AmeriCorps, the Citi Foundation and Points of Light) will engage nearly 700 young people by debuting a new dimension to this youth development program. Across the country, ServiceWorks partners will be hosting these 16- to 24-year-olds in a Skill Building Bootcamp. This day-long program will use service learning as a way to develop skills critical to helping disconnected youth enhance their opportunity for college and career success.

Led by members of AmeriCorps VISTA and community volunteers, “Service Scholars” will be empowered with new communication, leadership and project management skills. Those skills will then be put to use in real time, as each bootcamp will culminate in a service project honoring the legacy of Dr. King. Find details on ServiceWorks MLK Day Bootcamps and service projects across the U.S. [here](#).

It’s not too late to participate in MLK Day of Service activities. Visit [AllforGood.org](#) and [pointsoflight.org/MLK](#), where you can find a volunteer opportunity or pledge to host a SundaySupper.

#### About Points of Light

Points of Light – the world’s largest organization dedicated to volunteer service – mobilizes millions of people to take action that is changing the world. Affiliated with 250 cities and partnered with thousands of nonprofits and corporations, Points of Light engages more than 4 million volunteers in 30 million hours of service each year – we put people at the center of change. For more information, go to [www.pointsoflight.org](#).

#### About the GE Foundation

The GE Foundation is the philanthropic organization of GE. For over 50 years, it has invested in programs based on a fundamental premise: a quality education ushers in a lifetime of opportunity, which helps build a strong and diverse workforce and citizenry. The need for a quality education has never been more urgent, especially for individuals from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds. GE Foundation continues to address this societal and economic imperative by supporting high-impact initiatives that improve the access, equity and quality of public education in GE communities around the world.

#### About the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, the Volunteer Generation Fund, and the Social Innovation Fund, and leads President Obama’s national call to service initiative, United We Serve. CNCS leads the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and supports grants to mobilize hundreds of thousands of Americans in service on MLK Day. Visit our website at [NationalService.gov](#).

Michele Melendez

Points of Light

[mmelendez@pointsoflight.org](mailto:mmelendez@pointsoflight.org)