

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Group Volunteering Brings Friends And Family Closer

(NAPSA)—In a world that's running on overdrive, co-workers often can't get away from their desks for lunch. Families are so over-scheduled that they have to make formal arrangements just to have dinner together, and friends postpone plans until they have free time.

Many people struggle to find time for the people they care about most. Now 1-800-Volunteer.org, a service of the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, is responding to that problem. It's an innovative solution that will allow friends, family, co-workers and other groups to spend leisure time together more regularly and more meaningfully by giving back to their community as a team.

The Web-based service, already recognized as a leading Internet destination for nonprofit organizations and volunteers, has launched its newest feature. Its new group sign-up capability allows you to volunteer with the people who mean the most to you on the issues that mean the most to you. Groups can be of any size, can include volunteers of all ages and can come from any source: your family, workplace, house of worship, circle of friends, even your gym or sports league.

"Volunteers play an essential role in the daily life and well-being of any community," says Robert Goodwin, president and CEO of the Washington, D.C.-based Points of Light Foundation. "The reverse is also true: Individuals gain tremendous rewards from the experience of volunteering. We realized that those rewards would only be compounded if we could create a system that helped people volunteer with their friends and family. This new service can help volunteers



Volunteering can be a great way to spend time with your friends and family.

strengthen their bonds with the community at large and within their own inner circle."

Using its highly successful matching technology, 1-800-Volunteer.org pairs groups with nonprofit organizations on the basis of the matching criteria they select: interests, skills, schedule and availability. The group leader creates the group's database profile and is then contacted by nonprofits in need of help. That initial contact occurs via a server that keeps the group members' identity and personal data concealed until they reveal the information to the nonprofit of their choice.

Signing up is easy and can be done in just minutes online. Once your group is registered, you'll receive information about organizations that are looking for groups like yours to get involved. It's possible that the nonprofit best suited to your needs is one you wouldn't ever have learned about without this service. So register today at www.1-800-Volunteer.org and see for yourself how good it feels to improve the quality of life in your community while spending more quality time with the people you love.