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Springfield group wins Governor's Award

Awards mark beginning of Volunteer Week in Virginia

Richmond, Va. – Governor Timothy M. Kaine has announced recipients of the 2009 Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards. These awards highlight the efforts of outstanding citizens of the Commonwealth who seek to enhance the lives of others in their communities. The awards are presented to groups, individuals and families whose efforts exemplify extraordinary volunteer service.

"I offer sincere congratulations to the volunteers who made a difference in the lives of others this year," said Governor Kaine. "When we serve our community as volunteers, our unique skills, perspectives and experience make us a stronger Commonwealth."

A Springfield group is a recipient of the 2009 Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Award.

The Phoenix Project – Learn and Serve Social Media Technology Program: *National Service Program Award.*

The Phoenix Project was founded in 2006 to address the complex challenges facing the nation, especially those arising from severe poverty. The organization works at the intersection of poverty, social entrepreneurship and technology and has developed highly successful programs across Virginia that can be replicated nationwide.

In 2007 and 2008, students from 42 colleges and universities participated in intensive summer training programs that included completing dozens of community projects. This model, which started in the distressed community of Petersburg, was duplicated in Newport News and Northern Virginia and serves as a model for other communities nationwide. Projects have been developed in collaboration with all stakeholders in the community and include research and consulting, student internships with partner community organizations, student participation in the nonprofit leadership and social entrepreneurship program, direct service trips, speaker and arts exchanges, service by university alumni, and professional development opportunities for community leaders.

This year, with support from Learn and Serve America, the Phoenix Project, together with its partners Craigslist Foundation and George Mason University, has initiated a groundbreaking program to research, develop and implement effective social media tools to mobilize students more efficiently to meet the needs of citizens in economically distressed communities. The Phoenix Project's representatives traveled to more than 40 colleges and universities to generate interest and build support. So far, the group has educated 75 young leaders to revitalize distressed communities and rallied hundreds more to join in accelerating the social entrepreneurship movement in Virginia.

Governor Kaine has proclaimed April 19 - 25 as Volunteer Week in Virginia. As a prelude to the recognition week, these individuals and organizations were presented their awards during a special awards ceremony April 15 in Richmond. The Governor's Advisory Board on National and Community Service, Virginia Corps and the Virginia Department of Social Services' Office on Volunteerism and Community Service hosted the ceremony.

At least 1.7 million Virginians volunteer their time and talents annually. Virginians average nearly 243 million volunteer hours, equaling more than \$4 billion dollars worth of service to the state. For more information about the awards and Volunteer Week in Virginia, visit www.vaservice.org.

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