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CONTACT: Scott McFarland
(217) 685-5930

Make A New Year’s Resolution To Volunteer In 2017

_Millions raised for charity in 2016 and award nominations available_

SPRINGFIELD – Illinoisans donated millions of dollars to charity in 2016, while also contributing millions of hours of service with a value of more than $7 billion. The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Serve Illinois) would like to top that number and is asking everyone to resolve to volunteer more in 2017.

Thousands of community organizations are in desperate need for volunteers throughout the year, and many of those opportunities go unfilled. A great way to find a place to volunteer is by visiting www.Serve.Illinois.gov, where you can search through more than 2,500 volunteer opportunities throughout Illinois.

“When we ask people why they don’t volunteer, they tell us that they either didn’t know where to go or no one asked them to,” said Scott McFarland, Executive Director of Serve Illinois. “We are addressing both those issues with www.Serve.Illinois.gov. Anyone can serve. Even if you only have an hour to give, there is an organization that needs that hour.”

In addition to giving time, you can also donate. On November 29, 2016, approximately 22,500 donors gave almost $10.5 million to charities to celebrate Giving Tuesday - www.ilgive.com. “This one day effort shows what can be accomplished if people give a little of their time or money,” said Scott McFarland. “Our neighborhoods are only as strong as we make them, and volunteering is the best way to make them better places to live.”

Those who volunteered in 2016 can be nominated for the Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards. On April 25, 2017, Serve Illinois will present individual awards to one youth (18 years and under), one adult (19-54 years old), and one retiree/senior (55 years and older) from each of Serve Illinois’ five service regions across the state (Northeast, Northwest, East Central, West Central, and Southern). AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and for-profit business awards will also be available in each of the regions. Nominations are at www.Serve.Illinois.gov and are due by February 17, 2017.

Serve Illinois is a 40 member (25 voting and 15 non-voting), bi-partisan board appointed by the Governor and administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Its mission is to improve Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the state. Serve Illinois is accomplishing this mission through the support of local community-based efforts to enhance volunteer opportunities and the administration of Illinois' AmeriCorps program. For more information on Serve Illinois, please visit www.Serve.Illinois.gov.

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