

DATE ISSUED: April 15, 2004

REPORT NO.04-079

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council  
Docket of April 19, 2004

SUBJECT: City of San Diego Volunteer Month April 2004

#### SUMMARY

Issues – Should the City Council adopt a resolution declaring April 2004 as “City of San Diego Volunteer Month?”

Manager’s Recommendation – Adopt the resolution.

Fiscal Impact – None.

#### BACKGROUND

The Citywide Volunteer Program was established in 1995 to work with Volunteer Managers and supervisors in City departments to build (and support existing) volunteer programs. A Volunteer Manager’s Manual provides citywide policies and procedures for volunteer recruitment, training and recognition.

As a result of budget constraints, the Program was staffed at a minimal level during calendar year 2003. During the latter part of 2003, Community & Economic Development Department took over the Program and its administrative responsibilities. As a result, the Fiscal Year 2003 annual report on the volunteers and volunteer hour statistics is just now being compiled for submittal later this year.

City departments continue to use thousands of volunteers to help shelve books in libraries, assist with clerical and data entry work, graffiti, brush, weed and litter removal from parks, beaches and other City property, and staff the READ and STAR/PAL programs. Volunteers also support the Police Department’s Volunteers in Policing,

Reserves, Cadets and Retired Senior Volunteers Programs (RSVP), and serve on the City's many boards, commissions and special task forces. During FY 2002, over 45,000 individual and group volunteers contributed over a million hours to City departments and programs. Using the national average value of \$16.05 per hour (provided by the Points of Light Foundation), the total value of this volunteer time to the City of San Diego is estimated to be over \$17 million.

As a cost savings measure, training sessions for both department Volunteer Managers and Program staff have been curtailed, and we have temporarily ceased publishing the Volunteer Opportunities brochure (a recruitment tool which in past years has been distributed to branch libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, high schools, colleges, military and other organizations). The main source of recruiting volunteers is the City website where the Volunteer Program maintains a web page. The page includes a list of volunteer opportunities in each City department and an application that can be submitted electronically. Staff is in the process of updating the web page with respect to volunteer opportunities in the departments.

Approximately sixty (60) applications from individual and group volunteers are received each month and forwarded to Department Volunteer Managers seeking assistance. Another sixty (60) people call the Program Info line every month requesting information on the Citywide Volunteer Program or opportunities in individual City departments.

## DISCUSSION

National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an Executive Order establishing the week as an annual celebration of volunteering. Since then, every U.S. President has signed a proclamation promoting National Volunteer Week as it is acknowledged that recognition is an important aspect of retaining volunteers. This year, National Volunteer Week is April 18 – 24.

For the past six years, the City has made a special effort to recognize its volunteers during National Volunteer Week. A resolution declaring April 2004 "City of San Diego Volunteer Month" is being proposed again this year.

This year's recognition is especially significant in San Diego as hundreds of volunteers assisted during and after the Cedar Fires. The City quickly established a Local Assistance Center in Scripps Ranch staffed with the many federal, state and local agency representatives, as well as nonprofit organizations established to respond to disasters. Many community members came forward to volunteer their time, money, resources and assistance to individuals impacted by the fires. Both individuals and organizations contacted the City to lend a helping hand. To name a few, Scripps Ranch Civic Association came forward and provided several hundred hours of volunteer work at the Local Assistance Center. San Diego Volunteer Lawyers also provided hours of voluntary legal assistance. St. Gregory the Great Church provided their facility for numerous meetings and as a collection center for donations. The local Boy Scout troop volunteered

their time and assistance to the community by delivering sandbags. Many local businesses and individuals also prepared and donated food, clothing, etc.

In each of the past five years, the Citywide Volunteer Program, in partnership with Volunteer San Diego and the Central Balboa Park Association, has distributed 5,000 free passes to Balboa Park museums, the zoo and other local attractions to thank volunteers throughout the city. In addition, for the past three years, the Padres and Kobey Swap Meet have participated by each donating 3,000 tickets to be given to volunteers. Many City departments recognize their volunteers during the month of April although others do so at other times during the year. Because of the cost involved, departments are unlikely this year to be able to reward their volunteers with lunch celebrations as in past years. For that reason, Volunteer Managers and Citywide Volunteer Program staff will continue to look for less costly ways to recognize and thank the thousands of individuals who give back to their communities by volunteering with the City of San Diego.

Respectfully submitted,

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Debra Fischle-Faulk  
Assistant Director  
Community & Economic Development

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Hank Cunningham  
Director  
Community & Economic Development

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Approved: P. Lamont Ewell  
Assistant City Manager