Welcome to Points of Light's 2012 National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan and heart of the Midwest. You are joined by more than 5,000 service leaders from around the world to examine a new generation of citizens making their mark – young people, veterans and civic entrepreneurs creating innovative solutions to reshape our world.

During our time together, we will hear from three generations of the Bush family about how they’re redefining service. J.R. Martinez will represent a new generation of veterans returning from war eager to apply their knowledge, skills and experience in continued service. Dr. Jill Biden and first lady Michelle Obama will share their leadership through Joining Forces with our veterans in solidarity and support.

Points of Light’s Service Ambassador Kevin Bacon will showcase how he leverages his fame and talent to generate dollars for nonprofits.

CNN's Soledad O'Brien will frame our nation's education challenges and we will be inspired by Chicago's great service leaders like U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Mark Shriver.

Large celebrations and intimate gatherings will unite Conference participants, civic leaders, colleagues and friends to examine new ideas and bigger possibilities for activating 21st century volunteers. As you navigate around the more than 150 workshops, immersion learning sessions and more, stop by the exhibit hall for tools, best practices and services. Also, be sure to pick up the next two editions of our Conference newsletter for the latest and greatest news and event excitement.

Let your experience in Chicago be the next turning point in your life of service as we break away from old traditions and sector boundaries and take volunteerism to new levels.

**Create Your Service Turning Point**

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**Key Events**

**Target**, the Conference Excellence in Education sponsor, is adding extra excitement to the “Celebrating the Power of Service in Education” session on Tuesday by randomly selecting five attendees to receive a $500 Target GiftCard donation to their favorite school. CNN’s Soledad O’Brien will host a discussion with Secretary Arne Duncan and others on the powerful mechanism service can play in the classroom and after school to support the education of students. Join us Tuesday in the Skyline Ballroom (W375) for your chance to win.

Be one of the first 1,000 attendees to arrive for tomorrow’s “Civics and Service: Helping Drive Economies Through Action,” hosted by Chase, and receive a free $10 lunch voucher for use at McCormick Place. Doors open at 10 a.m., session starts at 10:30 a.m. in the Skyline Ballroom (W375). Hear how thought leaders, corporations and individuals are making an impact in their local economies and setting the stage for significant change in society through volunteering and service. Featured speakers include Jonathan Greenblatt of The White House, Dr. Randy Kroszner, former Governor of the Federal Reserve System and The Second City.

**AmeriCorps Alums Celebrate Service**

AmeriCorps Alums partnered with local Chicago AmeriCorps networks for their Sunday Pre-conference. The event served as an exciting opportunity for networking and professional development for both conference attendees and local AmeriCorps alumni. The session attendees shared their service stories and learned best practices gleaned from chapter cities across the country. Following the Pre-conference, the group gathered for a reception, hosted by the Peace Corps, where AmeriCorps Alums and Peace Corps alumni engaged in stories of domestic and international service.

AmeriCorps Alums is hosting their Town Hall session Tuesday from 12:30 – 2 p.m. in W190 B. The sold-out event will feature a year-in-review summary by the National team, presentation from one of this year’s Eli J. Segal Entrepreneurship Award recipients, testimonials from national chapter leaders and an advocacy conversation with ServeNext.

“We’re excited to welcome the more than 500 AmeriCorps Alums attending Conference this year. Our Pre-conference and Townhall serve as opportunities for us to connect as a community of leaders in the service movement. We want to highlight the growing impact of our national efforts and the success of our local chapters. Conference is the right place for Alums to convene because AmeriCorps alumni continue to demonstrate the limitless possibilities of a lifetime of service.”

- Ben Duda, executive director, AmeriCorps Alums

**Exploring Service for Military Members, Families**

Before the excitement of Conference got underway, Points of Light, Chase and ITT Exelis hosted the Community Blueprint Summit for Change, a time to explore ways to create community-based solutions to meet the needs of service members, veterans and their families.

During the two-day session, which concludes today, participants explored how to bridge military and civilian communities to create a stronger, more united nation. Topics included military and civilian partnership and collaboration, trends and research on the challenges facing service members, veterans and their families, and models for engaging military and veteran volunteers to address our nation’s most pressing challenges.

The Community Blueprint Summit for Change featured an array of special guests, including Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army General George W. Casey, veteran Bryan Anderson, craigslist founder Craig Newmark, General Marianne Watson of the National Guard Bureau and former Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colonel David Sutherland.

Get more information at VolunteeringandService.org
Youth Making their Mark

More than 250 youth, age 13-18, convened at the generationOn Youth Summit, hosted by the youth service enterprise of Points of Light, for an afternoon of civic dialogue and service-learning. This empowering event capitalized on these young leaders’ experiences to reflect on the power of youth involvement in service, mobilized participants to take action and equipped them with tools and creative solutions to benefit their local and global communities.

Attendees began their day with a service project to create Good & Ready “Black Out Boxes,” filled with flashlights, batteries, food, water and notes of comfort, to prepare seniors for emergencies. Notable youth leaders shared their service stories in a panel discussion and attendees explored their personal strengths, interests and goals to develop ideas for new projects in their communities.

Seeds for Change Creates School Gardens

Conference has a legacy of active engagement with its host cities’ communities and this year is no exception. Seeds for Change, sponsored by Chase, showcases Chicago’s motto “Urbs in Horto (City in a Garden)” as a model for how environmental and economic success can be achieved through service.

Registered volunteer attendees will work alongside students, parents, teachers and other local community members to create a garden at Theophilus Schmid Elementary School, Donoghue Charter School and Wendell Phillips High School in Chicago.

Volunteers will build plots, plant seedlings, construct greenhouses and benches, and learn how to overcome the challenges of finding fresh produce in various parts of the city known as “food deserts.” More than 609,000 Chicago residents live in these areas, which lack access to grocery stores and healthy food options.

The fun will continue during the Welcome to Chicago All-Conference celebration on Monday evening after the opening plenary, where attendees will assemble seed packets, seedlings, implementation guides, service-learning materials and gardening supplies to create 500 “Seeds of Change: Community Garden Kits” to be given to schools throughout the city.

Chicago public schools with access to a garden will receive at least one of the kits. The installation, seeding and upgrading of these gardens will engage thousands of volunteers including youth, community members and conference volunteers. Chase and Points of Light will also provide specialized training and implementation guides for other communities to replicate the program.

Good & Ready Helps Families Prepare

Good & Ready, led by Points of Light, is a collaborative emergency preparedness engagement initiative working to increase youth and family preparedness working with core partners including the American Red Cross, Ready.gov and the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes. The program seeks to elevate awareness, engage more people in preparing themselves and others, promote the importance of being prepared for emergency situations and disasters within your homes and communities, and raise the profile of September’s upcoming National Preparedness Month.

Individuals and families can become more prepared by making emergency plans with family members, hosting a preparedness activity, building disaster prep kits and by seeking training to be a volunteer in emergency response. Youth Summit participants did their part by gathering emergency supplies to help the elderly get prepared.

For more information, visit the Good & Ready booth in the exhibit hall or attend the Good & Ready Solution Center Monday from 1-2:30 p.m. in room W175 A.