

mom's minute

Calling to the Need to Serve

THE VOLUNTEER CENTER OF THE EAST BAY



Youth volunteers deliver food to homeless families in their area.

Sept. 11 marks the first federally recognized National Day of Service and Remembrance since the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001. Started by family members of victims and signed into law by President Barack Obama, this day marks the first time the nation has observed the anniversary of the terrorist attacks as a national day of service.

To encourage participation, **serve.gov**, a national Web site managed by the Corporation of National and Community Service, seeks to link people across the country with local volunteer opportunities.

The Volunteer Centers of the East Bay and San Francisco, which includes San Mateo County, serve as local representatives in these nationwide efforts. It provides thousands of volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, in addition to resources, consulting and training services.

Karla McCormick, program director for The Volunteer Center of the East Bay, discusses what families can do to participate and honor those who died during 9/11.

**What is the purpose of the National Day of Service and Remembrance?**

By pledging to volunteer, perform good deeds or engage in other forms of charitable service during the week of 9/11, citizens will help rekindle the remarkable spirit of unity, service and compassion shared by so many in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. We can help pay tribute to the first responders, rescue and recovery workers, volunteers, and our brave military personnel who continue to serve to this day.

**What are some volunteer opportunities in which young people and families can engage?**

Families can find opportunities to make a difference at their schools, local parks and at agencies that welcome young children. Additionally, families can organize clothing and food drives in their neighborhoods to benefit local food pantries and homeless shelters. Many children are using their birthday parties to help out local nonprofits.

**What should people think about when selecting a project?**

People should choose a volunteer opportunity that interests them. Look for an agency or group that works with issues that you and your family feel strongly about. The Volunteer Center Web site, **helpnow.org**, lists more than 1,200 volunteer opportunities at more than 600 community nonprofits.

**In addition to helping others, how else can volunteering benefit participants?**

Volunteers can gain new skills, make new friends and feel great by making a difference. Reports indicated that people who volunteer experience more happiness and better health than those who don't volunteer.

For more information on The Volunteer Center, visit **helpnow.org**. It is linked to **serve.gov**, a nationwide service initiative that is managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

— Millicent Skiles

green family

Local Planet-wise Businesses

In conjunction with the Bay Area Green Business Program, San Mateo County's Green Business Program honors businesses and agencies shunning conventional wasteful practices by taking actions to conserve resources, prevent pollution and minimize waste. The SMC Green Business Program, which began in July 2007, is funded by local and regional government agencies and other public agencies, featuring a repertoire of 100-and-counting certified green businesses that range from restaurants to automotive services.

The growing list includes Harmony Frozen Yogurt of San Carlos (**harmony-yogurt.com**), Trilium Dental in Redwood City



(**TriliumDentalClinic.com**), My Gym Children's Fitness Center in San Carlos (**my-gym.com**), Safari Run in San Mateo (**safarirun.com**), and Nandi Yoga in San Mateo (**nandiyoga.com**).

Dr. Zac Held of Held and Lau, DDS, Family and Cosmetic Dentistry in San Carlos (**great-grin.com**), says of his county-certified practice (and winner of San Carlos' 2008 Green Small Business of the Year award). To find more green businesses in your community visit Bay Area Green Business Program's website at **greenbiz.ca.gov**. It's not a bad way to help the planet.

— Tiffany Carboni