



HandsOn
NETWORK

United We Serve
SERVE.GOV

HandsOn Network: Answering the Call

United We Serve Impact Report June-September 2009

On June 22, 2009, President Obama made a historic call for citizen action. He launched United We Serve, a comprehensive effort to engage more Americans in every day actions, community projects and neighborhood activation aimed at key administration priorities: education, economic recovery, environmental conservation, community renewal and healthcare.

HandsOn Network answered this call by announcing our Get HandsOn! action campaign: a multi-year effort to change the volunteer landscape by increasing the number of available service opportunities and skilled, trained volunteer leaders to manage these efforts. This pledge underscores HandsOn Network's overall sector value and reinforces our core theory of volunteer-driven change.

During the initial "Summer of Service" (June 22-September 11, 2009) launch of United We Serve, the Network made a significant contribution to the overall federal activation and experienced deep increases in both leaders and projects activated.

MARKED GROWTH IN PROJECTS

One of the stated goals of the Obama administration is to make volunteerism simple. The cornerstone of the summer kick-off was the launch of Serve.gov, a service project search engine aggregator. HandsOn Action Centers, corporate partners and other stakeholders responded by quickly adding available volunteer projects to the system. These projects underscore our Network's commitment both to creating more opportunities and improving overall project quality.

- HandsOn Action Centers reported more than 31,266* distinctive projects and volunteer referrals during the Summer of Service period. These represent approximately 175,000 potential individual service opportunities.
- The Network marked a 9 percent increase in total available managed projects and referrals from the same period in 2008.
- The Corporation for National and Community Service cites more than 400 non-profit partners that participated in the "Summer of Service" but HandsOn Network hosted and directly managed **over 12 percent of the total available opportunities in Serve.gov.**

Perhaps more important than the impressive increase in project activation is the Network's dedication to project quality and the commitment to creating new project partners and impact opportunities around critical issues of the environment, education, and economic recovery.

*This includes projects in the 1800Volunteer and the HandsOn Technology platforms and does not include all affiliate databases.

For example, HandsOn Central California took earnings from their Casey Neighboring Grant to launch a comprehensive Summer of Service program. This involved dozens of new neighbor-driven service projects focused on neighborhood clean-up, low income home renovation and youth development. The result was deep innovation, more high quality projects and more comprehensive volunteer involvement in planning and execution of community projects.

Likewise, the Volunteer Center of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties (Washington), created their first Eco-Impact Day, a day in which volunteers participated in a series of activities that benefitted the environment. At the conclusion of the event, volunteers preserved 1,000 trees and constructed miles of trails for community use.

United We Serve has in many ways been a springboard for project innovation, creativity and new-found neighborhood partnerships that are creating impact and lasting change.

UNIQUE ACTIVATION OF LEADERS

At our core, HandsOn Network believes that volunteer leaders maximize the levels that impact organizations can leverage. The more trained, well-equipped leaders, the more volunteers a grassroots non-profit can activate. Equipping volunteer leaders frees organizations to focus on their bottom line and manage limited human resources. Part of HandsOn Network's unique sector value is the ability to mobilize volunteer leaders with excellence. HandsOn Network marked dramatic growth in both volunteer and volunteer leader engagement during the summer effort for United We Serve.

- Collectively, we experienced a 60 percent growth in total volunteer "sign-ups" from the same period in 2008 and noted a 61 percent increase in leaders attending a leader training session for the first time.
- For example, Hands On Charlotte launched a volunteer leader pledge drive and both broke their organizational record for new volunteers attending an orientation and trained 39 new project leaders.
- This summer, 2,027 leaders organized, managed or supervised projects within the Network, which was a 19.7 percent increase from 2008.

Practically, this means we have more volunteers from diverse backgrounds organizing and leading service efforts in communities across the nation.

Volunteers like **Michael Louis from Broward County, Fla.** On July 27, Louis, a youth transitioning from foster care into independence, spearheaded a project for Volunteer Broward leading the organization's collection of supplies for the FLITE Center, a brand new facility that provides a "one stop shop" for foster youth to access a variety of resources including job skills training, educational and employment services and mentors. Later in the week, Michael led 12 other foster care youth in a project that involved painting canvas banners for the FLITE Center's new office. Michael's experiences have led him to seek other project leadership and management experiences with HandsOn Action Center Volunteer Broward.

UNPRECEDENTED PARTICIPATION FROM OUR NETWORK OF NETWORKS

HandsOn Network is about volunteer mobilization. We know that many volunteers find opportunities through our more than 250 HandsOn Action Centers, but many more give back through schools, member associations and workplaces. That is why we work through a vast "Network of networks" to bolster the number of projects and volunteer leaders in the sector.

- Through our new youth entity, we activated 10 managed projects that involved 1,238 adults and 1,586 children. Projects ranged across the environment and community renewal.
- Eighteen AmeriCorps Alums Chapters recruited 233 volunteers and trained and supported 41 new volunteer leaders.
- More than 18 Corporate Service Council Companies including Cisco, GE, KPMG and Morgan Stanley submitted volunteer leader and project stories that were featured both on HandsOnNetwork.org and Serve.gov. These projects represent thousands of additional volunteers and project hours.

FIRST NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE

HandsOn Network joined forces with our action centers and other Network partners to create an unparalleled call to action on the first National Day of Service and Remembrance. Together, we orchestrated more than 919 projects, a 51 percent increase in Network participation compared to September 11, 2008. Projects ranged from community clean-ups to volunteer open houses. Examples include:

- In New York City, 64 UBS employees worked with children from PS1 in Chinatown. The students involved in the projects were firsthand witnesses to the tragic events that occurred in the city on Sept. 11, 2001. Students and adult volunteers created a Make a Difference Service Fair and sent thank-you notes to local public safety workers. The group also assembled care packages for neighborhood food pantries.
- In Philadelphia, Mayor Nutter launched PhillyServes Day with HandsOn Action Center Greater Philadelphia Cares. The event engaged more than 2,000 community leaders in a day of diverse service activities.
- The Volunteer Center of Story County (Iowa) hosted a virtual open house to invite community members inside to learn how to get connected with meaningful volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer Center sent an invitation asking people to visit its Web site from Tuesday, Sept. 8 to Friday, Sept. 11 to read a special message from Volunteer Center staff, participate in a virtual scavenger hunt for a chance to win a volunteer gift basket and search through more than 120 volunteer opportunities.
- Chicago Cares led a 500-person service project with the Chicago White Sox volunteer corps. Activities included packing food for mothers, infants and elderly community members at the Catholic Charities MAC Warehouse in the Back of the Yards neighborhood, landscaping at community gardens in North Lawndale and Irving Park, cooking a lunch for 250 shelter residents and sorting the donation room at Cornerstone Community Outreach in Uptown.

HandsOn Network showcased how quality volunteer projects and outstanding leaders can be game-changing for increasing overall civic participation in communities large and small. As a Network, we will continue to march forward with a bold campaign over the next two years that will drastically increase the available number of quality volunteer projects throughout the country and mobilize tens of thousands of new civic service leaders who can coach, guide and support neighborhood action. Our mark on the Summer of Service is clear, and it is the mark we will continue make, helping more Americans find their way to “be the change.”