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## **Solano Nonprofits Coalition Announces Launch of New Countywide Volunteer Center**

### ***Call for Solano Agencies to Add Their Volunteer Opportunities to the Website***

Fairfield, April 23, 2010 – After over a year of planning, fundraising, and preparation, the Solano Nonprofits Coalition gathered today at the County Administrative Center with local partners and community leaders to announce the launch of the Volunteer Center of Solano County.

“Volunteers are an essential resource for nonprofits in Solano County. Our nonprofit agencies are seeing an unprecedented surge in demand during this recession from low-income families who are struggling to make ends meet,” said Supervisor John Vasquez, Chair of the Solano County Board of Supervisors. “Volunteers can multiply the power of programs for seniors at home and kids who need tutoring, as well as protect wildlife or help stray animals. People who volunteer at nonprofits also tend to donate to those nonprofits, which is so very important because of reductions in funding these days.”

The Volunteer Center website will be open to the general public this summer. Right now, the Center is encouraging all nonprofit and public agencies to list their volunteer opportunities as soon as possible. To do so, please visit [www.VolunteerSolano.org](http://www.VolunteerSolano.org) or call 707-422-2232.

Prior to the launch, Solano was the only Bay Area County without a countywide Volunteer Center. To explore this gap, the Solano Nonprofits Coalition convened an Advisory Council, chaired by United Way of the Bay Area. The Council has selected the Volunteer Center of the East Bay to operate the Solano Volunteer Center and has raised over \$60,000 thus far to support the effort. Although the Advisory Council has secured

enough funds for the first year of operation, more funds are needed to sustain the effort over three years. To make a donation, go to [www.VolunteerSolano.org](http://www.VolunteerSolano.org).

Local nonprofits have clearly articulated their need for this program. In a survey of 65 Solano nonprofits conducted by the Advisory Council in November of 2009:

- Over 90% of Solano nonprofits currently use volunteers to advance their mission;
- A majority of those nonprofits have experienced challenges in recruiting volunteers;
- **100% of respondents indicated they would use the services of the Solano Volunteer Center** (and over half indicated they would “definitely” use it before knowing details about the new organization).

The Volunteer Center of Solano County will:

- Maintain a countywide database of volunteer opportunities in Solano County, which will be available on a website ([www.volunteersolano.org](http://www.volunteersolano.org))
- Create a Solano-specific (707) phone number to personally match individuals with volunteer opportunities.
- Connect nonprofits to potential board members via BoardLink, an online service created specifically for this purpose. .
- Organize catalogs of holiday opportunities including volunteer opportunities, adopt-a-family programs and food & gift drives.
- Support Solano nonprofits with Volunteer Management Training, workshops and online resources.

Founding Donors to date:

California Volunteers

Children’s Network of Solano County

Community Action Partnership of Solano

Faith in Action

First 5 Solano

Solano Nonprofits Coalition

United Way of the Bay Area

Valero Benicia Refinery

Kay Bosick, affiliated with Youth and Family Services, Inc.

Saskia Lembesis, affiliated with Meals on Wheels of Solano County

Leanne Martinsen, affiliated with Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa and Solano

Maria Moses, Community Member

Cynthia M. Phillips, affiliated with 2B Successful Youth, Inc.

Linda Seifert, Solano County Supervisor, District 2

Rochelle Sherlock, Community Member, Consultant

Stephanie Wolf, affiliated with Solano Community Foundation