

California State University, Fresno volunteers approach 1 million-hour goal

Volunteer work in community service from California State University, Fresno moved toward the million-hour mark during the 2008-09 academic year.

A report by the campus Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning says more than 13,000 students, staff and faculty logged 923,565 hours of service. The local economic impact was estimated at \$22 million, based on national philanthropic standards.

Campus volunteers participated in a variety of activities such as READ Fresno, blood drives, Serving Fresno days, alternative spring break, Bulldog Pantry and Earth Day.

"President Welty has set a goal for our university to provide 1 million hours of service annually by our Centennial celebration in 2011," said Chris Fiorentino, director of the Richter Center. "The 2008-09 statistics reflect a 38 percent increase over the previous year's figures. We should see another big increase this year, which will help us reach the president's goal one year early."

"These figures are impressive, but what is even more important is the service to our community that they represent," said Fresno State President John D. Welty. "There are thousands of people in our region whose lives were positively impacted thanks to the generosity of our university community."

"At the same time," Welty added, "our students gain personally, professionally and academically from these service experiences, which mean that we are helping create a better community through service and learning."

Fresno State's service focus was honored in February by the Corporation for National and Community Service with the Presidential Award for General Community Service.

Volunteer activities for the 2009-10 academic take the spotlight at the 17th annual Community Service Opportunities Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2, in the Memorial Garden south of the Kennel Bookstore. Booths will be set up by dozens of nonprofit programs to provide information on volunteer opportunities.

For more information, call the Richter Center at 559.278.7079 or visit www.csufresno.edu/cesl.

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