

Good News Department

Matching Technology Helps Volunteers And Nonprofits Connect

(NAPSA)—We've all heard the story. They met online, found they shared common values and interests and are now in a committed relationship. But this story has a twist. It's about how people of all ages and backgrounds all over the country are using the Internet and matching technology not to add romance to their lives, but rather to find volunteer opportunities that add meaning to their lives.

Internet "matchmaking" has never been more successful. As millions of busy people seek ways to reconnect with their neighbors and give to their communities, volunteering is filling a need not only for those who seek help, but also for those who provide it. Using the same matching technology behind popular dating sites, 1-800-Volunteer.org, a service of the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, pairs individuals and groups with the nonprofit organizations best suited to their interests, skills and schedules.

"Our database and matching criteria enable prospective volunteers to find not just an opportunity, but the right opportunity for them. That allows the nonprofits to strengthen the overall quality, reliability and value of their services, which in turn improves the quality of life in the communities they serve. Equally important, it creates more satisfying and rewarding experiences for the volunteers themselves," says Robert Goodwin, president and CEO of the Washington, D.C.-based Points of Light Foundation. "Our goal is to help create long-term relationships between volunteers and nonprofits who are committed to the same goals and therefore are more strongly committed to one another."

Volunteers in the 1-800-Volunteer.org database create a volun-



A new Internet database can connect people with volunteering opportunities.

teering profile based on their skills, interests and abilities. Nonprofits then contact them with information about where they're most needed. That initial contact occurs via a server that keeps the volunteers' identity and personal data concealed until they share it with the nonprofit of their choice—an organization that they know in advance is seeking volunteers with what they have to offer. It's a tremendous resource for anyone who doesn't know where to get started in volunteering.

If you've been looking for a way to give back to your community, or if some local or national issue has inspired you to take action to create change, 1-800-Volunteer.org is the fastest, simplest and most efficient way to connect with like-minded people. Your best match may even be an organization you've never heard of, one you might never encounter except through this database. You can register at www.1-800-Volunteer.org. The sooner you create your profile, the sooner you'll start learning about opportunities to make your world a better place to live. And that's an aspect of Internet matching that everyone can love.