

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: January 12, 2009

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## **“Obama Urges Nation to Perform Volunteer Service on King Day”**

**Local volunteer opportunities are plentiful and easy to access at nonprofit Web site,  
[www.ConnectSouthside.org](http://www.ConnectSouthside.org)**

With President-elect Obama's call for Americans to serve their communities on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday and throughout the year as part of his "Renew America Together" initiative, ConnectSouthside.org, a free local communication and information sharing resource, has stepped-up its efforts to connect people to local, Southside volunteer opportunities.

More than 200 local volunteer opportunities and over 500 organizations that work to benefit our community are listed on the ConnectSouthside Web site. The site is open access, so local organizations easily input and update information about their services, activities and needs. “The searchable database is continuously updated and provides the most current and comprehensive information about the Southside nonprofit community,” said Wendy Austin, Director of ConnectSouthside.

The types of volunteer opportunities listed on ConnectSouthside are varied and can be searched by issue area. There’s something for everyone including: after-school tutoring or mentoring; data-entry, computer tech, or other office assistance; building and beautification; translators, tour-guides, or theatre usher; pet fostering, or serving on a Board of Directors or as a spokesperson.

Studies show there are many personal benefits of volunteering. A recent report from the Corporation for National and Community Service states that there is “a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.”

Volunteer work is also an excellent way to learn and develop new skills and abilities and explore options in the world of paid employment. Many career counselors recommend volunteering as an excellent way to network and make connections.

ConnectSouthside.org is a program of the Appomattox Regional Library System and is funded by The Cameron Foundation, and the John Randolph Foundation.

For more information about using the ConnectSouthside Web site, [www.ConnectSouthside.org](http://www.ConnectSouthside.org) as a one-stop, free source for volunteering and other information important to the Southside region, contact Wendy Austin at (804) 458-6329 ext. 2010 or [waustin@connectnetwork.org](mailto:waustin@connectnetwork.org).

**[www.connectsouthside.org](http://www.connectsouthside.org)**