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Church of Scientology Recognizes Tampa Bay Volunteers

Deserving Tampa Bay area volunteers were presented with the President's Volunteer Service Awards at the National Volunteer Week celebration at the Fort Harrison religious retreat of the Church of Scientology Flag Service Organization.

In celebration of National Volunteer Week, Tampa Bay volunteers were recognized April 24 at the Fort Harrison religious retreat of the Church of Scientology Flag Service Organization.

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 to acknowledge the positive impact of volunteers on American society. In emphasis of the importance of volunteerism, the President's Volunteer Service Award was created in 2003, to honor Americans who "by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service."

In his proclamation on National Volunteer Week 2013, President Obama stated: "National Volunteer week is a time to renew that fundamentally American ideal of service and responsibility. It is also a time to recognize the men, women, and children who bring that principle into practice every day by lifting up the people around them... . Ordinary men and women have stepped forward and accomplished extraordinary things together, uniting as friends and neighbors and fellow citizens. The strength they have shown reminds us that even in our darkest hours, we look out for each other. We pull together. And we move forward as one."

Thirty-three Tampa Bay area volunteers and groups qualified to receive the President's Volunteer Service Awards this year.

Church of Scientology Public Affairs Director Pat Harney presented the volunteers and groups with gold, silver or bronze pins, framed certificates from the Corporation for National Community Service, and letters from President Obama thanking them for their service.

The awardees included:

- Youth for Human Rights Florida for their work in bringing human rights education to youth around the world.
- United for Human Rights Florida for providing educators with human rights teaching materials free of charge.
- Foundation for a Drug-Free World, Consumer Energy Solutions Drug-Free World initiative and other volunteer groups for their drug education work.
- The Way to Happiness of Florida, whose volunteers spent more than 12,000 hours in 2012 providing character-building seminars and distributing copies of *The Way To Happiness*, a common sense guide to better living by author, humanitarian and Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard.
- Criminon Florida volunteers, who help criminals regain self-respect and once again become contributing members of society. Some 2,500 inmates are enrolled in its correspondence courses in addition to the on-site program they provide to inmates of four Florida correctional facilities.

- The Stop the Violence Coalition of St. Petersburg led by Brother John Muhammad, which dedicated more than 1,300 hours to keeping Childs Park in St. Petersburg safe through a series of vigils, street rallies and anti-crime information programs.
- The Community Learning Center in Clearwater, which provided more than 4,000 hours of free tutoring for English and Spanish-speaking children and adults.
- Hillsborough County School Board Member Susan Valdes who volunteered more than 2,000 hours in 2012 to educate underserved children of the Tampa Bay area.
- Kay Dillinger earned a gold-level award for her years of volunteer work in educating and raising living standards of local youth.
- Pinellas County Public Defender Bob Dillinger, who received a lifetime achievement award for his work providing food and clothing to Pinellas County children in need.

"It is actions such as those acknowledged here today that help decrease crime, drug addiction, abuse and illiteracy and bring unity and joy to the community," said Harney, who offered the continued support of the Church of Scientology to volunteerism throughout the Tampa Bay area.

"Whether you are a Scientologist or not, we are here to help you in whatever way you choose to volunteer," said Harney. "We are committed to improving this community and helping unite efforts to overcome barriers to progress and prosperity."

Scientologists on five continents engage in collaborative efforts with government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to improve conditions in their communities and society. The Church of Scientology has published a series of new brochures to meet requests for more information about the Scientology religion and its support of global humanitarian initiatives and social betterment programs. For more information, visit the Scientology website at www.Scientology.org.

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The Scientology religion was founded by L. Ron Hubbard in 1952 and the first Church of Scientology was formed in Los Angeles in 1954. The religion has expanded to more than 11,000 Churches, Missions and affiliated groups, with millions of member in 167 countries.



Clearwater Community Learning Center volunteers were among those recognized April 24 at the National Volunteer Week celebration at the Fort Harrison religious retreat of the Church of Scientology.