



National Volunteer Week, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During National Volunteer Week, we recognize all those Americans who generously donate their time and energy to the service of others. These selfless individuals have a profound influence upon the life of their communities and the character of our Nation.

The abundance of voluntarism and charitable giving across the United States today is not surprising—throughout our Nation's history, Americans have readily responded to the needs of others. The early American settlers relied on each other's help to break ground and build homes in the New World. Volunteers eventually won our country's Independence. The men who later wrote its Constitution set aside their farms and personal interests for a long hot summer in order to shape a government for the new Nation. Their work and the risks they took were not for personal profit, but were for the benefit of all Americans. Men of faith and vision, the Nation's Founding Fathers recognized their responsibilities toward others and toward posterity. Many delegates to the Constitutional Convention solemnly noted that their efforts would determine the fate of future generations.

The system of government the Founding Fathers framed so carefully has enabled voluntarism to thrive in the United States. For example, freedom of speech allows us to express openly our political and social concerns; freedom of assembly allows us to join together in efforts to improve our communities. In short, our Constitution ensures that the light of individual goodness is not extinguished by the heavy hand of government, but is instead kindled by the bright flame of liberty.

Our forefathers' sacrifices have helped the United States to become a great and prosperous nation. For the sake of generations to come, our own generation must likewise accept the obligation to serve others. From now on in America, any definition of a successful life must include service to one's neighbor. It is only by continuing this proud tradition of service that we ensure our Nation's success.

As we look around us today, we see signs of truly successful lives. We see neighbor helping neighbor, Americans serving Americans. Today, nearly half of all adult Americans are active as volunteers. We know them well: the grandmother at church or temple who cares for infants so their parents can attend services, the cook at the local soup kitchen, the tutor who helps the illiterate learn to read, the teen who visits nursing homes, the neighbor who campaigns door-to-door for his favorite candidate, and the family that opens its home to unwed mothers or foster children.

I salute these individuals and the numerous organizations across the country that help to coordinate their activities. My Administration is committed to promoting their efforts and encouraging others to join them—that is why I have established an Office of National Service at the White House, and that is why I personally urge every American to follow their fine example.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of April 9 through April 15, 1989, as National Volunteer Week. I ask all Americans to join in saluting and thanking our Nation's volunteers, as well as the organizations that support their efforts. I also encourage every American to take part in appropriate events and activities in observance of National Volunteer Week and in celebration of all that volunteers do for our country throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

George Bush