



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ANNUAL DAY OF SERVICE

Statewide – Volunteers throughout West Virginia are doing something to make a difference in their communities for Make a Difference Day 2009.

Make a Difference Day is a national day of helping others - a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Everyone is encouraged to participate by doing something – large or small – to help his or her community. Created by USA WEEKEND Magazine, Make a Difference Day is an annual event that takes place on the fourth Saturday of every October.

A sampling of projects throughout the state include:

- **LifeBridge AmeriCorps** - In honor of Make a Difference Day, LifeBridge members in the Morgantown area will work with the United Way to facilitate home repairs for Community Repair Partners of Monongalia and Preston Counties. The group is working in conjunction with the WVU Center for Civic Engagement, who recruited WVU students as volunteers for the home repair projects. They will be installing a garage door on an elderly woman's home for weatherization, providing a clean-up service to another elderly woman's home, and installing new floors in a handicapped, elderly woman's home. LifeBridge AmeriCorps members are also collecting food items to donate to food pantries statewide. To donate food in your area or to learn more about Make a Difference Day projects through LifeBridge AmeriCorps, contact Betsy Southall at (304) 340-3519.
- **Appalachian Forest Heritage Area** - The Monongahela National Forest, Mountain State Grotto caving group, and Appalachian Forest Heritage Area AmeriCorps members are joining forces to clean up the Pink Helictite Cave sinkhole. Pink Helictite Cave has its entrance at the base of the sinkhole west of Durbin. The sinkhole had been used as a dump

for many years. Sinkholes are directly related to groundwater quality. At Pink Helictite Cave sinkhole, water enters the cave from a spring that pours over the limestone cliff on one side of the sinkhole, and from overland run off that passes through the sinkhole. With the sinkhole filled with household trash, this water carries pollutants into the area's karst groundwater system. This Make a Difference Day project will help clean out the trash to protect groundwater quality. Volunteers from the community are urged to participate in this Make a Difference Day project. For more information, call Linda Tracy with the US Forest Service at (304) 636 1800, ext 275.

- **Southern Appalachian Labor School** - Members of the SALS (Southern Appalachian Labor School) organization will be repairing a porch for an elderly lady in the Oak Hill region. In addition, after-school kids and a coordinator will visit the elderly and help them make crafts and read books. Care packages will be given to community members and SALS staff and other volunteers from Tennessee participated as volunteers for Bridge Day on October 17. For more information, contact SALS by emailing @citynet.net.
- **Jobs for a Stronger Ohio County** - AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be working on community gardens, housing rehabilitations, building clean-up, and assisting the Catholic Neighborhood Center. For more information on how to participate, contact Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence at (304) 232-2630.

Nationally, USA Weekend Magazine and the Entertainment Industry Foundation are joining forces for Make a Difference Day this year. Through October, entertainers have written essays about why they support the "I Participate" initiative. Individuals can visit [.iparticipateusa.org](http://iparticipateusa.org) to read these essays.

For more information about projects happening in West Virginia for Make a Difference Day, visit [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org) or call 304-558-0111.

Volunteer West Virginia is the state's Commission for National and Community Service. The agency challenges West Virginians to strengthen their communities through service and volunteerism by identifying and mobilizing resources, promoting an ethic of service, and empowering communities to solve problems and improve the quality of life for individuals and families.

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