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Outstanding volunteers to be honored by Nebraska's First Lady

Volunteers from throughout the state will be honored April 18 at a luncheon in conjunction with the Governor's Conference on Rural Development at the Holiday Inn Express in North Platte. A total of eleven awards will be presented at the event, which is hosted by ServeNebraska, the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission.

Nebraska first lady Sally Ganem is honorary chairwoman of the ServeNebraska 2012 First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards. Jamesena Moore is chairwoman of ServeNebraska.

Award honorees reflect the outstanding spirit of community service in our state. Nebraskans consistently rank among the Top 5 nationally for volunteerism and community engagement. Each year more than half-a-million Nebraskans volunteer in excess of 65 million hours of service. Their time is valued at \$1.4 billion. A major part of why Nebraska volunteerism continues to grow is the vast network of national service members and volunteers across Nebraska who give their time and talent to serve those in need.

The **First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards** categories and recipients:

National Service Award: Roselaine "Rosie" Shores, 90-year old Foster Grandparent volunteer since 1984 with the Pioneer Foster Grandparent Program, sponsored by Blue Valley Community Action Partnership of Beatrice. She currently serves at Wymore Southern Elementary each day school is in session, helping children in the classroom, building relationships and bonding with students who need a "grandmotherly figure."

Outstanding volunteer group of the year: Heartland Council of Pioneers, Omaha, is a nonprofit volunteer organization, comprised of retirees from the telecommunications industry. The group supports projects such as Hug-a-Bears in Omaha, across the state and nationwide that focuses on education and goodwill. In 2011, the group accumulated 43,443 volunteer hours.

Outstanding volunteer of the year: Pat Boeshart of South Sioux City., who, as president of LiteForm Technologies worked with city officials, local businesses and residents on a flood control plan to stop the 2011 flood waters. LiteForm employees worked with volunteers to complete the "Z-Wall" barrier sections in less than five hours. Pat's quick reaction to the crisis spared heavy damage caused by the flood waters, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Professional commitment to service, Debra Hartman Award: Pat O'Hanlon, outreach nurse of OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc. in Omaha, offers quality health care to the underserved. Pat is invested in the South Omaha community and navigates a confusing healthcare system to ensure that all populations needs are met, even offering rides to appointments. He's regularly seen working at a Stephen Center in South Omaha and daycare's to provide immunizations. In 2011 alone Pat was able to see and treat 2,500+ patients.

Outstanding service-learning program: Hastings College Teacher Education "Extra Mile Walk", was created by college students to raise community awareness and provide ongoing funding for the Food 4 Thought backpack program. The students spent 300+ volunteer hours working with all areas of the community to participate in the walk through donations and sponsorships. They raised \$3000, \$2500 went to Food 4 Thought and \$500 is in reserve for next year's Extra Mile Walk.

Outstanding student leader: Hope Edwards, Lincoln. Hope's junior year led to the idea of creating a "StudentServe" day to provide a culture of volunteerism in the Lincoln Public Schools. Hope met with the LPS superintendent, Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler and all 51 principals to get support for the project. StudentServe was an incredible success with over 9,000 students, staff and parents participating in community service on October 1, 2011. Hope worked to establish sustainability for StudentServe and it will be an annual event.

Outstanding community partnership in education: Food for Thought Project Partners, Omaha, is an outstanding example of a community partnership in education. University of Nebraska Omaha Gerontology students, Blackburn Alternative Program and Adams Park Community Center came together to meet the needs of the Near North Omaha senior citizens. Due to budget cuts, these seniors lost their meeting space and daily meal program. Through the volunteer efforts of the three partners the needs of this group have been met and continue to grow. UNO and Blackburn students have served 1300 volunteer hours in providing 1,350 healthy meals.

Outstanding school volunteer program: University of Nebraska Kearney, Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE). The SIFE team has a strong passion for outreach service related to youth entrepreneurship education and community development. Their mission is "Head for Business, Heart of the World". Annual projects include the New Venture Adventure Day where high school students develop their leadership and entrepreneurial skills by working in teams to present business proposals to local business professionals. Team leaders spent 100 to 500 volunteer hours implementing the community projects.

Outstanding business support for education: Walmart Logistics Distribution Center, 7018 Associates, North Platte. This team of associates partnered with the Food Bank of the Heartland, North Platte Salvation Army and Project SEARCH to provide food and manpower to deliver, on average, 180 food backpacks to six Title 1 schools within the North Platte community. Project SEARCH helps students with disabilities learn vocational and competitive skills to help them enter the workplace and to become more independent in the work environment.

Outstanding community service project: Kearney Tackles Cancer Campaign. The Good Samaritan Cancer Center reached out to Kearney High School, Kearney Catholic High School and the University of Nebraska Kearney to organize a fundraiser to alleviate the financial burden of local cancer patients. They assembled teams and the Tackle Cancer campaign was born. Since 2009, \$75,000 has been donated to the Patient Assistance Fund, which helps with transportation or prescription co-payments.

Lifetime achievement in volunteer service: Allen J. Beerman, Lincoln. Allen has served his community and the state of Nebraska well. His knowledge, enthusiasm and passion for public service is inspiring whether he is addressing a youth group, senior citizens, public officials or dignitaries from other countries. He has been actively involved with the Cornhusker Boys and Girls State for over 30 years, the longest serving member of the NEBRASKAland Foundation at 40 years. He is a dedicated member of Rotary and commits time and effort to speak to other civic organizations across the state and throughout the United States. He inspires others to serve their community for the common good.

For more information about ServeNebraska's award categories, nomination forms, and past honorees go to www.serve.nebraska.gov.