



City of Houston News Release Office of Mayor Sylvester Turner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 1, 2016

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Houston Youth to Participate in White House Summer Opportunity Project

ServiceWorks event will cover communication, networking, project management and conflict resolution

Mayor Sylvester Turner, Volunteer Houston and Points of Light are pleased to announce a ServiceWorks Skill-Building Bootcamp, in partnership with the White House Opportunity Project. This high-energy, immersive experience will feature workshops, interactive discussions and a service project benefitting the Houston community. Participants will be 150 area youth between the ages of 16 – 24 who have successfully completed summer employment through the Hire Houston Youth Program.

“There is a strong link between volunteerism and employability,” said Mayor Turner. “By volunteering, young job seekers gain experience, develop new skills and strengthen their own networks. Employers are increasingly placing value on job candidates who demonstrate civic commitment. It can often be the deciding factor in a competition between two candidates of equal experience.”

Mayor Turner will kick off the day-long event during a 9 a.m. news conference, which will take place at Houston Independent School District’s Carnegie Vanguard High School on August 6, 2016. And Points of Light Chair Neil Bush will lead a lunchtime “Sunday Supper” style conversation around how racial and ethnic prejudice impacts not just Houston communities, but a young person’s path to success in school and in the workplace.

This event will serve as the official Houston launch of ServiceWorks, a national partnership between Points of Light, AmeriCorps and the Citi Foundation. Starting in August, ServiceWorks will be hosted at two local organizations, Volunteer Houston and World Youth Foundation, and will provide hundreds of underserved 16-24 year-olds a pathway to college and career success through volunteering and service during the 2016-17 school year.

The White House launched the Summer Opportunity Project this year to ensure that young Americans have access to a job in the summer that will teach them these types of valuable lessons. “Helping young people find their first jobs is extremely important to President Obama. He understands that access to a job in the summer and beyond teaches young people valuable lessons about hard work and responsibility,” said Jerry Abramson, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Approximately 500 young adults were employed this summer at some of Houston’s leading companies through the Hire Houston Youth program.

About Hire Houston Youth

Hire Houston Youth provides local youth with an 8 week summer job or internship experience. Students work between 32-40 hours a week for 7 weeks, earning at least \$8 an hour.

About Volunteer Houston

For 41 years, Volunteer Houston has been the city's sole referral service connecting volunteers to a broad spectrum of diverse nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations all around Houston and its vicinity rely on Volunteer Houston to acquire over 50,000 volunteers per year.

About Houston Independent School District

The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States. It serves approximately 215,000 students at 283 campuses and is one of the largest employers in Houston, with about 29,000 team members.

About ServiceWorks

ServiceWorks – powered by AmeriCorps, the Citi Foundation and Points of Light – is a groundbreaking, national program that uses community engagement and volunteer service as the primary strategies to help underserved young adults develop the skills they need to prepare for college and careers..

About the White House Summer Opportunity Project

Launched in February 2016, the goal of the Summer Opportunity Project is to increase the number of young Americans participating in evidence-based summer opportunity programs, decrease the percentage of youth experiencing violence over the summer, and make sure that young Americans have the support they need to get their first job.

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