



Call to Service

By Kristine Wallach, Program Manager

CSERF Programs

IN JULY, PRESIDENT BUSH MARKED the six month anniversary of his "Call to Service." The President urged Americans to dedicate at least two years of their lives - or about 4,000 working hours - in service to their community. Because community involvement and volunteerism have been on a steady decline in the past 30 years, this challenge is significant.

The SPIRIT and Adopt-a-School Programs have a loyal and dedicated group of volunteers who are meeting the President's challenge by donating their time to either care for the medically indigent or teach youth about health.

But we need more help! The unfortunate truth is that each year the need for volunteers grows as state and local budgets reduce funding for health care and educational services.

Donating your time and expertise can be extremely rewarding, as our current volunteers will attest. You can volunteer as little as a few hours every few months at a school, or as much as a few hours each week at a local clinic. You can provide primary care services, teach, or volunteer to see patients in your area of specialization. There are also volunteer opportunities in the following community programs:

The Imani Clinic, a student-run clinic in Oak Park, is seeking physicians to preceptor medical students. The clinic is staffed by undergraduates who do intake and lab work, and by medical students who see patients under the supervision of a physician. Without volunteer preceptors, the clinic is unable to see patients. The Imani Clinic is looking for a commitment to precept 4 or 5 Saturdays per year.

Genesis is a program of Loaves and Fishes that provides crisis intervention, case management, and psychiatric treatment to homeless men, women and children in Sacramento. It needs volunteer psychiatrists willing to donate a few hours a week to treat these patients.

The HEALTH Project seeks physician volunteers to provide health education classes on topics like Hepatitis C, diabetes, and the side effects of psychotropic drugs, to the homeless population. These presentations would be in the evenings.

Research shows that the two main reasons individuals do not volunteer is that they were never asked or didn't know where to start. Consider yourself asked! And the way to start is to call (916) 453-0254 for more information about these and other volunteer opportunities. You'll be glad you did!

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society
5380 Elvas Avenue #100 • Sacramento, CA 95819
916.452.2671 PH • 916.452.2690 FX • Email: info@ssvms.org