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## **YOUTH WITHOUT COLLEGE EDUCATION LESS LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER**

### **NEW REPORT EXAMINES CORRELATION BETWEEN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE & VOLUNTEERING NEW MEDIA, RELATIVES MAY HELP BRIDGE GAP**

**Tisch College, Tufts University** —Despite the upward trend in youth volunteering, young adults with no college experience are half as likely to volunteer as their collegiate counterparts, according to a new report examining the relationship between youth volunteering and college experience. Roughly 43 percent of the 20-to-29-year-old population has not attended college.

Conducted by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University's Tisch College and released jointly with the National Conference on Citizenship ([www.ncoc.net](http://www.ncoc.net)) the report found that 25 percent of young adults who have attended college volunteered in 2007 while only 11 percent of those with no college experience volunteered. This gap has remained constant since 2002. The full fact sheet can be found at [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org).

Peter Levine, director of CIRCLE, said young people without college experience are underutilized and underestimated: "Studies show all young people want to get involved in their communities, and lack of college experience should not be the deciding factor," Levine said. "Schools, communities and government need to create more opportunities for all young people, not just the ones with a college education. Volunteering and participation in civic life is an important part of society, and no one should be excluded from an opportunity to do so."

The report found that young people who used new media tools such as email, social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace) and text messaging were more likely to volunteer. College and non-college youth use new media at similar rates. However, online forms of civic engagement (such as commenting on a blog for civic purposes) are less common among young people without college experience. These findings should be interpreted with caution because more research is needed on this topic.

"Facebook, Twitter and other new media were successfully utilized in the 2008 election to promote voting and political involvement among young people," said David B. Smith executive director of NCoC "With both college and non-college youth using social networking sites more and more, this technology may help to close the volunteer gap between these two."

Using data from the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) and other research, the report also found disparities within specific gender, racial and ethnic demographics. Regardless of college experience, young women volunteer at higher rates than young men. Additionally, whites with some college experience volunteer the most among 20-to-29-year-olds, volunteering at a rate of 28.2 percent. African Americans and Latinos with no college experience were the least likely to volunteer, with volunteering rates at 7.2 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively. American youth who live in rural areas have slightly higher rates of volunteering than the 19 percent national average for youth.

Eight in 10 young volunteers became involved by approaching the organization or being asked to become involved. Youth with college experience were more likely to have started volunteering through a pre-existing connection with that organization (33 percent) compared with 21 percent of non-college youth. Of those who started volunteering in some other way, youth without college experience were more likely to have started volunteering through a relative than college youth.

When asked for which type of organization they volunteered, “religious” organizations were the top choice for young people regardless of college experience. Most spend their time mentoring youth and teaching/tutoring, although young people with college experience were slightly more likely to provide professional or management assistance including serving on a board or committee.

Levine said he hopes the findings of this report motivate people to reach out to younger generations and inspire interest in civic affairs. “Given this poor economic climate and the downward trend in youth civic engagement, it is important, now more than ever, to impress upon our young people active involvement in civic life.”

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***CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)*** conducts and promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. A part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University, CIRCLE has received funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Carnegie Corporation of New York and several other foundations.

***The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service***, a national leader in civic engagement, prepares students from all fields of Tufts University to become engaged public citizens and community leaders.

***Tufts University***, located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville, and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized as one of the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the University’s schools is widely encouraged.

***The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC)*** measures, tracks and promotes civic participation throughout the United States. Guided by our Congressional Charter and the values of NCoC, we commission and publish the annual America’s Civic Health Index, a quantitative means for measuring our nation’s success or shortfalls under the goal of strengthening citizenship in America. In addition we hold our annual National Conference on Citizenship that brings together leaders in the civic engagement field to set concrete and ambitious goals to promote a more active and involved citizenry.