



# CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research  
on Civic Learning & Engagement

For Immediate Release:  
April 19, 2007

Contact:  
David Roscow, 703-276-2772 x21

## National Volunteer Week

### **Volunteering: It Runs in the Family**

#### **New Study Says Families, Political Awareness Drive Volunteerism Drive to ‘Help Other People’ is Top Motivation**

College Park, Md. – New research reveals that young volunteers are most likely to come from families where someone volunteers, and where politics is discussed. Most say they want to help people, and they’re most likely to believe they can make a difference in their communities.

Those are some of the findings among the data released by The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) at the University of Maryland. The research on youth volunteering trends found that 50 percent of young people between ages 18 and 25 who volunteer grew up in a family where someone spent time volunteering; while 65 percent of youth who do not volunteer followed their non-volunteering family’s lead. Further, the data showed that 60 percent of young people who volunteered came from a household where politics was discussed.

“National Volunteer Week celebrates the spirit, importance and civic duty of community service,” said Peter Levine, executive director of CIRCLE. “Our research shows that the family and the home are particularly important. They help to build a foundation for responsibility, commitment, caring, and skills for service in our young people.”

The study also found that political volunteers were the most likely to be recruited by organizations, but environmental volunteers were most likely to get interested through a friend, or other third party. The statistical breakdowns showing these and other trends in volunteering among youth people ages 15 to 25 can be found at [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org).

The data also revealed why young people volunteer. Overwhelmingly, the single most common reason young people cited for volunteering was “to help other people,” regardless of the type of organization. Other motivations were mixed among those who volunteered for political, environmental, youth, educational, community and religious organizations. Among political volunteers, 41 percent volunteered “to address a social or political problem,” while 24 percent of environmental volunteers cited “some other reason.”

- more -

## **Page 2/ Volunteering Among Young People**

The research is based on *The 2006 National Civic and Political Health Survey*, which was conducted from April 27 to June 11, 2006. The survey sampled 1,700 young people ages 15 to 25, and 550 adults ages 26 and older. The Pew Charitable Trusts funded this survey.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Since 2001, CIRCLE has conducted, collected and funded research on the civic and political participation of young Americans. CIRCLE is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and other organizations.