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VOLUNTEER CENTER RECRUITS NORTH TEXANS FOR DISASTER RESPONSE

DALLAS, TX (June 1, 2011) – More than 11,000 volunteers are needed to pre-register to assist throughout North Texas during a time of catastrophic disaster. The Volunteer Center of North Texas (VCNT) is dedicated to recruiting volunteers to assist before a disaster strikes.

“By registering in advance we can contact individuals and let them know exactly where help is needed most,” said VCNT Disaster Services Manager, Lisa Raneé Tatum. *“If a person has already completed an application and passed a background check, they can be put to work immediately, rather than waiting with the hundreds of other people who spontaneously decide to volunteer after disaster strikes.”*

VCNT is a part of a unique collaboration called the Mass Care Task Force, a partnership between the American Red Cross Dallas Area Chapter, The Salvation Army DFW Metroplex Command, and the North Texas Food Bank to collectively respond during times of disaster. The partnership was developed in 2005, when the organizations realized there was a need to streamline response efforts and reduce duplication of services after Hurricane Katrina.

Since the formation of the Mass Care Task Force, the collaboration is attempting to raise more than \$20 million to be fully equipped and ready for a disaster that could affect up to 250,000 people with as many as 37,500 needing shelter. To date, monies have primarily been raised through a challenge grant from the Communities Foundation of Texas and major gifts from Southwest Airlines, Dr Pepper Snapple Group, and philanthropist Lyda Hill. In 2008, the Mass Care Task Force collectively responded to Hurricanes Ike and Gustav.

“With June 1 signaling the start of hurricane season, it is vital that volunteers commit to being available to assist when a disaster strikes North Texas,” said VCNT Chief Executive Officer, Julie Thomas. *“The people in this region have a natural desire to help a neighbor in need, and pre-registering as a disaster volunteer allows that process to move at a much faster pace.”*

Volunteers can pre-register to become disaster volunteers by visiting www.vcnt.org and clicking on the disaster image on the homepage. By signing-up before disaster strikes, volunteers will be able to receive regular updates about disaster response efforts in North Texas, and they will be invited to participate in trainings to be prepared to better assist when a disaster strikes.

In 2011, many parts of the United States and the world have experienced major catastrophes, and North Texas has been documented as a severe weather area. The likelihood of a disaster striking in North Texas is not a matter of if, but a matter of when.

About the Volunteer Center of North Texas

The Volunteer Center of North Texas (VCNT), founded in 1971, is one of the largest and most active volunteer centers in the country. A primary purpose of VCNT is to recruit volunteers, including individuals, corporations and civic and faith-based groups, to serve nonprofits and their clients throughout the North Texas area. For more information, visit www.vcnt.org