

THE WHITE HOUSE

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**FIRST LADY LAURA BUSH TO RECOGNIZE TOPEKA WOMAN FOR DEDICATION
TO VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

First Lady Laura Bush will present the President's Volunteer Service Award, on behalf of President George W. Bush, to Kathy Dechand when Mrs. Bush arrives in Topeka, Kansas, on Tuesday, September 16, 2008. Dechand is a volunteer with Girl Scouts of Northeast Kansas & Northwest Missouri. To thank them for making a difference in the lives of others, President Bush honors local volunteers when he travels throughout the United States. He has met with more than 650 volunteers, like Dechand, since March 2002.

Dechand has been a volunteer for 20 years with Girl Scouts of Northeast Kansas & Northwest Missouri. As a troop leader she helps girls in kindergarten through high school learn new skills and gain confidence and independence. Five years ago Dechand helped create Girl Scout Troop 588 for girls with physical and developmental challenges, and she is active in leading meetings and coordinating specialized activities for the troop. Dechand also volunteers as a Service Unit Coordinator for more than 35 Girl Scout troops in Kansas and Missouri. In this role, she facilitates community service projects for Meals on Wheels, the Topeka Rescue Mission, and The Iraq Project in which Girl Scouts send handmade stockings to soldiers during the holiday season. In addition, Dechand has been a volunteer with Keep America Beautiful for 22 years and a volunteer for more than 30 years at the Kansas Neurological Institute where each week she teaches residents daily living skills and crafts.

In his January 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush called on all Americans to make a difference in their communities through volunteer service. He created USA Freedom Corps, an Office of the White House, to strengthen and expand volunteer service. Americans are responding to the President's Call to Service. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 61 million Americans volunteered in 2006. Go to www.volunteer.gov or call 1-877-USA-CORPS to find an existing volunteer service opportunity in your area or to find more information about service programs, including national service programs such as the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Citizen Corps. USA Freedom Corps is also highlighting youth volunteer service. Visit www.volunteerkids.gov for games and ideas designed to show how America's youth are making a difference.

The President's Volunteer Service Award was created at the President's direction by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. The Award is available to youth ages 14 and under who have completed 50 or more hours of volunteer service; to individuals 15 and older who have completed 100 or more hours; and to families or groups who have completed 200 or more hours. For more information, visit www.presidentialserviceawards.gov.

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