



Volunteers of America®

CHESAPEAKE

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**In Second Year of Innovative Giving Campaign, Volunteers of America Chesapeake Uses Social Media to Engage Larger Community in Helping Those in Need**

*Courtney's Quest Gives a Face, Name and Story to Those in Need Throughout Maryland, D.C. and Virginia this Holiday Season*

**Lanham, MD** – (December 14, 2011) – Last year, Volunteers of America Chesapeake created an innovative video campaign called ***Courtney's Quest: 15 Days of Giving***, to increase support for the non-profit's busiest time of year. The campaign, consisting of 15 daily videos hosted and produced by the non-profit's communications manager, showed potential donors how their donations could make a direct, immediate impact. It raised \$75,000 in just one month to help Volunteers of America Chesapeake serve families in need throughout Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

This year, the non-profit, which is currently providing essential, high-quality health and human services to approximately 10,000 men, women and children in need decided to capitalize on its success last year and take Courtney's Quest to the next level.

"I learned a lot from last year's campaign and this year we really wanted to create a larger, overall campaign that would inspire engagement as much as it would inspire giving – and incorporate a wide variety of new tools and tactics to reach the public, our stakeholders and potential donors," said **Courtney Shirley**, Volunteers of America Chesapeake's communications and media relations manager.

To expand the campaign, Shirley developed ***5 Weeks of Giving***, a multi-platform social media and website campaign running from Nov.28-Dec.31 incorporating digital videos, blogging, social media and the non-profit's online donation program – Gifts of Hope – in hopes to make a connection between those who may be fortunate enough to celebrate the holidays with their families in their homes and those who may have fallen on tougher times at this time of year.

Each week consists of two videos aired through social media and the organization's website on "Make A Difference Monday" and "Watch it Wednesday," where Shirley, a former NBC reporter and anchor, takes viewers behind-the-scenes at the organization providing information and ways individuals can get involved. This year the campaign also features new videos sharing stories of those being helped. "Tell Us Tuesday" encourages social media engagement through current events and questions aimed at engaging the non-profit's online audience. "Thank You Thursday" spotlights a story of thanks on the Courtney's Quest blog, created and written by Shirley or other featured bloggers such as the non-profit's CEO/President and clients. "Fund Friday" targets financial and in-kind donations by fundraising through social media.

“By really embracing the world of social media in terms of giving and helping those in need, I believe we have found a really unique way to engage the community and show them how easy it is to help others less fortunate this holiday season,” said **James Wynn**, assistant vice president of development for Volunteers of America Chesapeake.

To learn more about Volunteers of America Chesapeake’s 5 Weeks of Giving, visit their website at [www.VOAchesapeake.org](http://www.VOAchesapeake.org)

To read the Courtney’s Quest blogs visit: <http://courtneysquest.wordpress.com>

To see the social media engagement visit: [www.facebook.com/VolunteersofAmericaChesapeake](http://www.facebook.com/VolunteersofAmericaChesapeake) or [www.twitter.com/VOAchesapeake](http://www.twitter.com/VOAchesapeake)

#### **VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE**

*Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc. is a faith-based, non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire self-reliance, dignity and hope through human services. Founded in 1896 in Baltimore, MD, Volunteers of America Chesapeake is one of the first branches of Volunteers of America - one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive human services organizations. Through a dedicated and committed team of more than 600 staff and 2,000 volunteers and guided by its Core Values: Caring, Respect, Faith, Quality and Trust Volunteers of America Chesapeake helps more than 10,000 people each year at its 26 programs serving: the homeless, mentally ill, individuals with intellectual disabilities, the aging, those in need of affordable housing, those recovering from substance abuse and community corrections. For more information about Volunteers of America Chesapeake visit: [www.VOAchesapeake.org](http://www.VOAchesapeake.org).*

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