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For Immediate Release

### **Volunteers of America Chesapeake Leading the Way Among Non-Profits in Promoting Health and Wellness**

*Non-Profit Kicks-Off Yearlong Employee Health & Wellness Campaign by hosting First Wellness Fair for Employees and their Families*

**Lanham, MD** - (June 23, 2010) - Volunteers of America Chesapeake, which operates 26 human services programs throughout the region serving the homeless, mentally ill, intellectually disabled, ex-offenders, substance abusers, elderly, and children, recently organized its first in what will be a series of annual wellness fairs for its 600-employee, Mid-Atlantic-based organization and their families. A unique move for a non-profit with limited resources, Volunteers of America Chesapeake continues to put a large amount of resources into making itself a leader in employee health and wellness.

“The Health and Wellness of our employees is very important to our organization,” said **Franklyn Baker**, chief operating officer, Volunteers of America Chesapeake. “Studies have shown that a healthier staff is more productive and demonstrates greater tenure with an organization.”

In the current economic downturn, many organizations across the nation are cutting costs by downsizing and eliminating employee benefits. Volunteers of America Chesapeake is keeping the health of its employees a top priority. The organization recently started offering additional supplemental insurance options to its staff benefits packages, conducted a wellness survey, is forming a wellness committee and on June 18, the non-profit held the first of many Wellness Fairs to provide an assortment of health services to encourage its employees and their families to focus on health.

Volunteers of America Chesapeake called upon the expertise of a variety of vendors to provide specific health screenings and advice for all that attended the event. Some services included:

- Southern Maryland Hospital Mobile Screening unit for Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Diabetes, BMI, and free Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms (AAA)
- Vision Tests and a CIGNA Dental Information Booth
- Chiropractic, Stress Massage, and Acupuncture Demonstrations
- Kaiser Permanente Interactive Booth including a Personal Trainer and Stress Testing
- Healthy Eating Chef to demonstrate healthy cooking from Diet to Go and an Onsite Nutritionist
- Representatives from the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Society, the American Heart Association
- Allergies and Asthma Resources
- AFLAC Insurance
- Heart Check America for Lung and Heart Screening

A vendor at the Wellness Fair, **Monique McFadden**, marketing director from Heart Check America said “I believe it is important that employees participate in wellness fairs because it is being proactive about their health and I love that.”

Volunteers of America Chesapeake provided healthy snacks and drinks, door prizes and offered mileage reimbursement for its employees to further encourage participation. The organization will be holding another Wellness Fair, **June 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Express in Springfield, VA.**

“The Volunteers of America Chesapeake Human Resources Department is partnering with the agency’s benefits broker, our healthcare providers and several health and wellness vendors, to kick-off a yearlong campaign of focusing on the importance of establishing and maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle,” Baker added.

**VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE**

*Volunteers of America Chesapeake, founded in 1896 in Baltimore, is the locally chartered affiliate of Volunteers of America, Inc., one of the nation’s largest and most comprehensive human services organizations. They accomplish their spiritually based mission by serving over 8,000 people annually through programs spread geographically from Baltimore, Maryland to Virginia Beach, Virginia.*

*Volunteers of America Chesapeake operates 26 programs that serve the homeless, mentally ill, intellectually disabled, ex-offenders, substance abusers, the elderly and children. The professional staff of more than 600 employees, partner with dedicated volunteers, local government officials, businesses, civic organizations and the faith community to provide high quality human services.*

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