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For Immediate Release

Volunteers of America Chesapeake Gives Back to Family it Helped out of Homelessness Who is Now Helping Others

Lanham, MD - (June 28, 2010) – In an unusual move for a non-profit organization, **Russell K. Snyder**, President and CEO of Volunteers of America Chesapeake, announced today that the non-profit will donate \$1 for each of its 600 employees to an admirable cause led by a family who turned its life around after receiving assistance from Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Loudoun Emergency Shelter and Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Loudoun Transitional Housing Program in Leesburg, VA. The Williams family of Sterling, Virginia, who benefitted tremendously from Volunteers of America Chesapeake's programs more than a decade ago, is using the \$600.00 donation to help others and travel to Costa Rica this summer, rebuilding shelters for those in need.

"It is so fulfilling when we hear about the amazing successes of individuals and families who have benefitted from our programs," Snyder said. "This family really epitomizes why our staff works so hard every day to provide essential services through our 26 facilities across the region.

"Volunteers of America Chesapeake's mission is to create sustained positive life changes for individuals and families by providing high-quality human services leading to self-reliance, dignity and hope. The Williams family is truly a testament to the services we provide and an inspiration for our staff, supporters, volunteers and those we serve."

In September of 1999, Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Loudoun Emergency Shelter welcomed **Rhonda Williams** and her four children during a time of exceptional hardship for the family. Williams said the family had "run out of all options." After turning to Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Loudoun Emergency Shelter, the family benefited from the organization's continuum of care and moved into Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Loudoun Transitional Housing Program. With open arms, hot meals, and warm beds, the Transitional Housing Program encourages clients on their road to self-sufficiency and permanent housing by providing a myriad of services to those in need including: health care, job training and assistance, counseling, financial budgeting and adult education, and on-or-offsite housing for up to two years for homeless women and children.

With assistance from the program, the Williams family was able to find its footing and move out of the facility. Over the years the children have defied the odds and succeeded academically, athletically and in leadership positions. Currently, three of the four children are

in college, and the youngest son, Michael, continues to succeed in high school. The children have exceeded not only expectations, but they have surpassed many of their peers. Williams' second son, Joseph, received a full scholarship to the University of Virginia after earning the highest SAT score at his high school. The oldest son, Victor, finished his second year at Bridgewater College in Virginia and serves as a substitute teacher in Loudoun County.

Both Victor and Joseph received scholarships from Leesburg's "Beat the Odds Organization," which recognizes youth who have faced hardship and overcome it.

Over the years, the Williams children have always made volunteering a priority in their lives. They have helped tutor younger children, built a peace park behind a mosque, cleaned up streets, participated as a Big Brother for Charlottesville youth and collected trash from the Anacostia River. They also rake leaves every year as part of a program in Fairfax County where donated proceeds benefit a variety of organizations.

Soon, the brothers will be taking on their largest volunteer effort yet; helping those in need in San Jose, Costa Rica. This summer, they will travel with The International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF) on a 2010 Discover True Friendship Service Tour, where they will renovate shelters and dining facilities for the Foundation Luz Para Las Naciones which serves orphans, underprivileged families and the elderly of San Jose.

"There is nothing more rewarding than learning that a family we once helped is now making it their personal mission to help others," Snyder added.

The Williams boys are currently seeking donations to fund their travel expenses and basic needs during their two-week trip abroad. They have created a website in order to raise financial support for their trip: giveforward.org/williamsbrothers.

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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.