

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APRIL IS GLOBAL VOLUNTEER MONTH IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County Highlights Proven Scientific Health Benefits of Volunteerism

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY–April 1, 2024–The Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County, transforming lives and communities for good through volunteerism and community engagement, urges community members to participate in Global Volunteer Month this April by engaging in volunteer activities and celebrations across the county. Opportunities for adults, youth, seniors, families and groups can be found at scvolunteernow.org/calendar.

The U.S. Surgeon General's Office recently [highlighted in an advisory](#) the negative health impacts of loneliness, isolation, and social disconnection, referring to the situation as an epidemic in the U.S. Negative health effects of loneliness, as cited in the publication, include:

- Higher risk of disease
- Higher levels of depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide
- Lower academic achievement and work performance

The Surgeon General's advisory underscores what has been known for over 50 years: volunteering combats loneliness by fostering social interaction and enhancing well-being, and builds empathy and raises awareness of community needs, creating a more equitable and vibrant community for all.

Karen Delaney, Executive Director of the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County, emphasizes the importance of volunteerism: "Volunteering is a pathway to genuine connection and a healthy, vibrant community. In response to the dual crises of loneliness and youth mental health, the Volunteer Center is the home for action and connection. We invite everyone to join us in service and community engagement. Together, we can transform our community and ourselves, promoting equity for all."

The Volunteer Center will kick off Global Volunteer Month with the YouthServe Spring Break program. YouthServe Spring Break will introduce 15 local teens to outdoor

activities, providing education on local social and environmental issues. Activities include a beach cleanup at Main Beach, participation in CityServe's Graffiti Paint Out, assisting Watsonville Wetlands Watch with a restoration project, and a day at the Homeless Garden Project to learn about sustainable agriculture.

The Volunteer Center's April calendar is also filled with opportunities for all ages to serve, connect, and make a meaningful impact in various causes. With nearly 100 organizations listing volunteer projects on the Volunteer Center's website, scvolunteercenter.org, there are options for remote participation, weekend involvement, short shifts, and long-term commitments.

ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER CENTER OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County (VCSCC) has been connecting individuals, organizations and businesses for good since 1967. Each year VCSCC engages with more than 500 community partners and more than 15,000 volunteers who connect meaningfully to help more than 9,000 residents in need. In addition to volunteer engagement and placement, VCSCC administers 19 programs to support community need, seniors, families, youth, covid response, disaster response and government partners to make Santa Cruz County a happier, healthier place to live. For more information, visit scvolunteercenter.org and find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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