A NATIONAL RECORD 135,000 VOLUNTEERS EXPECTED FOR 20TH ANNUAL GREATER PHILADELPHIA MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE
ANNUAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD PRESENTED & STUDENTS’ CIVIL RIGHTS MURAL UNVEILED

PHILADELPHIA, PA. – Organizers, sponsors, and community partners joined together today in a ceremony at Girard College to announce plans for the upcoming 20th annual Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service. Girard College will serve as the region’s signature project site for the sixth straight year.

Founder and director Todd Bernstein, who is also president of Global Citizen, announced that a national record 135,000 volunteers are expected to participate in some 1,800 community service projects throughout the region on the Monday, January 19 King federal holiday.

The Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service includes projects throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. Participants will include students of all ages from public, private, and parochial schools and colleges, senior citizens, community, religious, civic and non-profit organizations, businesses, military veterans, AmeriCorps members, elected officials and families.

The national King Day of Service was created in 1994 through federal legislation co-authored by former Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Harris Wofford and Atlanta Congressman John Lewis, both veterans of the civil rights movement with Dr. King.

This year’s Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) outlawing racial discrimination in voting.

“We will celebrate the landmark law that fifty years ago legally reversed racial discrimination in voting, said Bernstein.” “However, since then, several provisions of the Voting Rights Act have been reversed and continue to be challenged around the nation. As we mark this important anniversary, we must find ways of encouraging voter participation, not reducing it.”

Highlighting the 5,000 volunteers who will serve in some 150 King Day of Service projects, workshops and presentations at the Girard College signature project site will be more than one hundred volunteers, led by Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, serving in a series of service projects promoting non-partisan voter participation and empowerment, including constructing “Vote
Here” signs in different languages, to be displayed each election day at polling places throughout Philadelphia where English may not be a voter’s first language; painting murals celebrating the 50th anniversary of the VRA; and packing bags with voter information to be distributed later on King Day in a non-partisan voter registration outreach project in North Philadelphia.

Other projects celebrating the Voting Rights Act and voter empowerment will include:

- Training language interpreters to work at polling places on Election Day.
- Training high school students and Iraq/Afghanistan war veterans to become poll workers on Election Day.
- Workshop with women elected officials on empowering women to become candidates for elective office.
- **Why I Vote** video testimonials and social media campaign- #WhyIVote.
- Demonstrating how to use real voting machines.
- Children’s art project constructing voting machines from cardboard celebrating voting and the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act.
- Children’s project making buttons with slogans to inspire voting.
- Using computers for voter registration.

Philadelphia Orchestra executive vice president of institutional advancement, Ryan Fleur, attended the news conference to announce a continuing partnership with the Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service and Girard College. The Orchestra will perform their 25th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert at 1:30 pm in the Chapel as the concluding King Day of Service event at Girard College. Free tickets are available, starting today at noon, at www.philorch.org/mlk.

The King Day of Service will host its 4th annual Jobs and Opportunity Fair, presented by Target, Urban League of Philadelphia, I-Heart Radio, Comcast/NBC 10 and Global Citizen’s Mission365 program supporting military veterans.

Five hundred prospective employees will be choosing among some twenty local employers and AmeriCorps national service programs. Participants must pre-register at www.mlkdayofservice.org for one of two sessions: 9-10:30 am and 11-12:30 pm.

As part of the Jobs & Opportunity Fair, Target, Temple University, CVS Health and the City of Philadelphia will be presenting soft skills workshops, including resume writing, interviewing skills, starting a small business and providing a path to employment for military veterans.

“For the sixth consecutive year, the Girard College community proudly welcomes thousands of MLK Day volunteers to our campus,” said school president Clarence D. Armbrister. “It is fitting that we honor Dr. King’s memory at the intersection fifty years ago of two important events in the life of the civil rights movement-- Dr. King’s visit to the gates of Girard College in August 1965 and the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. Dr. King’s spirit of activism will be reflected in the many worthwhile community service projects that will be underway at Girard College on this universal day of service.”

Fifty-six King Day of Service sponsors are led by Target. Joining them are Global Citizen, United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, Urban Affairs Coalition, HandsOn Network, Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, McNeil Consumer Healthcare, Comcast/NBC-10, Girard

Philadelphia Mayor and King Day of Service co-chair, Michael A. Nutter, thanked everyone for making the Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service the country’s largest and a national model for sustainable civic engagement. He presented the 17th annual Harris Wofford Active Citizenship Award to 900AM-WURD.

“900AM-WURD has been a steadfast supporter and live broadcaster of the annual Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service,” said Mayor Nutter. “WURD’s tremendous civic commitment reflects the legacy of Dr. King and the work of King Day of Service—empowering the community to turn community concerns into citizen action and social justice.”

Previous award winners have been Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, Loraine Ballard Morrill, Ken Salaam, the Philadelphia Fire Department, Vanguard, YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School, Sacaree Rhodes, Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and Perelman Jewish Day School, Rev. Henry Wells, CityYear Greater Philadelphia, Christine James Brown, the School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, National School and Community Corps (EducationWorks), Woodlynde School and Jack Neary.

The Cecil B. Moore Philadelphia Freedom Fighters, the group of men and women who demonstrated in the 1960’s for an end to the discriminatory admissions policies at Girard College, will lead a workshop to share their experiences in the civil rights movement. They will also mark the fiftieth anniversary of their protest movement when Dr. King joined them in 1965 for a rally at the front gates of Girard College.

History Making Productions executive producer Sam Katz was on-hand to unveil a poster, “Deep Roots/Continuing Legacy: Philadelphia in the Struggle for Civil Rights.” The poster chronicles important anniversaries of memorable civil rights achievements, including the 20th anniversary of the Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service. The posters will be distributed to every Philadelphia public school and Free Library branch. They will also be given to King Day of Service volunteers.
Global Citizen, HandsOn Network, Urban Affairs Coalition, and the Mayor’s Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service will present a MLK365 Civic Engagement Expo that will provide information on the mission and work of dozens of local community organizations and opportunities to volunteer with these groups throughout the year.

McNeil Consumer Healthcare will present a Health and Wellness Fair that will feature an American Red Cross blood drive, CPR training and dozens more organizations providing expert advice, testing, and screening in areas including cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, sickle cell anemia, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, eating disorders and fitness.

Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church will present a Kid’s Carnival for children ages of 5-12 that will include story reading about Dr. King, I Have A Dream mobile making, skits on Dr. King and civil rights, entertainment and more. A King Day of Service coloring and activity book will be available for children to learn about Dr. King’s ideals of civil rights and civic responsibilities. The City Commissioner’s office will help future voters try out the first responsibility of citizenship in a demonstration of voting booths used in real elections. The After School Activities Partnerships (ASAP) will present chess and scrabble mentors trainings.

Thousands of students throughout the area are participating in the seventh annual One King Day, One King Book project to encourage children to read, write, and discuss essays about Dr. King. Children have been submitting essays and will receive a King Day of Service certificate.

There will be projects at hundreds of Philadelphia public schools and other schools throughout the region. Volunteers will beautify more than fifty Philadelphia Parks and Recreation facilities. The Philadelphia Fire Department is organizing neighborhood outreach projects on fire safety through all sixty-three fire stations.

Other King Day of Service volunteers will prepare food at homeless shelters and distribute meals to homebound seniors, organize health fairs and legal clinics, and perform plays about Dr. King and his principles of nonviolent social change and racial equality.

The news conference included the unveiling of a dramatic King Day of Service mural painted by students from six-area schools. The Philadelphia Mural Arts Program led the annual project in which each school created a 5’ x 6’ canvas mural focused on the 50th anniversary of 1965 Voting Rights Act and a 1957 speech given by Dr. King, “Give Us the Ballot.”

After completing the murals in late December, the panels were attached to form a single, panoramic 36’ x 5’ mural. The mural will be on display January 19 at Girard College. Participating schools and the Mural Arts Program artists who worked with the students are (left to right):

1. The Woodlynde School, Chester County, Pa. James Burns
3. Girard College, Philadelphia Nathaniel Lee
5. Rosa International Middle School, Camden County, NJ. Jennifer Fleisher
6. Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, Philadelphia Parris Stancell

Updated information on service opportunities is available on Facebook-- facebook.com/phillykingday and Twitter-- twitter.com/mlkdayofservice. The hashtag is #MLKDAY2015.

Global Citizen organizes the Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service and its year-round MLK365 program. Anyone or group interested in volunteering or hosting a service project should register at www.mlkdayofservice.org or call 215-851-1811. All organizations or groups planning projects are encouraged to register them at www.mlkdayofservice.org or 215-851-1811.

Organizations interested in becoming sponsors of the Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service and Global Citizen should contact Todd Bernstein at todd@globalcitizen365.org or 215-242-9070.

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