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Giving Back in an Economic Crunch

MIDLOTHIAN, Va. – Information taken from a 2007 research study shows that people tend to give from their hearts when they cannot give from their wallets. And that equals big dollars and cents for non-profits in the Richmond area.

While some organizations report a recent drop in giving, several non-profits are recording record giving in terms of time. According to www.independentsector.org, on average, every hour donated by a volunteer is equivalent to a \$19.51 monetary donation.

For organizations like Northfield Ministries, that means over \$351,180.00 in giving. Northfield Ministries reports over 18,000 hours of manual labor from over 2,000 volunteers over the last 2 years to renovate the 19th century plantation home in Cumberland, VA that will soon be a residential treatment facility for girls who are struggling with life challenges such as eating disorders, unplanned pregnancies, depression, or self harm.

“If the dollars came in place of the volunteers, the work on the Northfield home would be finished by now. But we would not have seen Northfield touch as many lives as we have without our volunteers,” says Kim Ruth, Northfield Ministries Board President.

In March 2009, 63 young women from the University of Richmond donated over 230 hours to scrape, sand and prime property fences. This work would have carried a price tag of more than \$1,000.00 if Northfield paid professionals to complete the work.

In April, 70 drapery and upholstery professionals from all over the country traveled to the Northfield Plantation home for their fourth designers’ upholstery weekend. Air fare, time, and travel were donated by the attendees, as well as much of the materials that were used. This project carried a price tag of well over \$126,000.00, but according to countless volunteers, the experience of giving back is priceless, for both the home and its workers.

Northfield Ministries is not alone in its reporting of volunteer hours. Ronald McDonald House in Richmond, VA also recognizes the value of its volunteers during these strained economic times. Executive Director, Jason Young says, “When people get involved as volunteers, it is a win-win situation. Yes, it helps the organization, but it also gives someone who might be between jobs a sense of purpose and serves as a great way to keep important skills sharpened.”

To learn more about the many volunteer opportunities with Northfield Ministries, visit www.northfieldfoundation.org, or call Gwen Seiler at #399-4634.

To learn more about Ronald McDonald House Charities in Richmond visit www.richmondrcmdhc.org, or contact Jason Young at #355-6512.