



1667 Snelling Avenue North, Suite D300
Saint Paul, MN 55108
P: (651) 631-3672 • F: (651) 631-2955 • www.nylc.org

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Contact:

Bill Snyder
National Youth Leadership Council
C: (651) 978-5886
bsnyder@nylc.org

President Clinton Celebrates the Legacy of National Service

(Philadelphia, May 23, 2006) — Tonight, former President Bill Clinton joined an estimated 2,800 participants at The 17th Annual National Service-Learning Conference to celebrate service-learning and honor former Sen. Harris Wofford. The president noted that the national- and community-service movement has given private citizens more “power to do good” than they’ve had at any time in history.

Citing challenges that face the nation, the president said, “As long as the people of this country are willing to take responsibility for their future — when they vote, when they contribute their money ... and when they are community servants — we will be fine.”

He lauded the accomplishments of the service-learning movement and Learn and Serve America, a program threatened by cuts in the Bush Administration’s budget proposal. “This movement, I hope, will sweep the world,” he said. “I hope we can convince Congress not to cut the budget.”

The event, held at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, marked the 100th anniversary of philosopher William James’ speech on civic service as the “moral equivalent of war,” often cited as the foundation for nonmilitary national service. Clinton also joined Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell and former Maryland Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend in honoring Wofford — who received the William James National Service Lifetime Achievement Award for his leadership advancing civic service over the past five decades.

Both Clinton and Wofford have been instrumental in advancing the concept of national service — Wofford in his work with the Peace Corps and Vista programs in the 1960s, and both of them, more recently, in advancing the legislation that created Americorps and supports service-

learning. Townsend was also honored with the Alec Dickson Servant Leader Award for her work promoting service-learning in Maryland through its Student Service Alliance.

The National Youth Leadership Council sponsored the event with support from State Farm ®. The William James National Service Lifetime Achievement Award was presented in partnership with other leading national service organizations, including America's Promise, Campus Compact, City Year, the Corporation for National and Community Service, Hands-On Network, the Institute for Global Education and Service-Learning, the National Service-Learning Partnership, the Points of Light Foundation, YouthBuild U.S.A., and Youth Service America.

Photos of the event can be downloaded from www.nylc.org/pressroom.

About The National Service-Learning Conference

The National Service-Learning Conference, organized annually by The National Youth Leadership Council, is the largest gathering of youths and practitioners from the service-learning field. In 2005, it drew nearly 2,900 attendees from across the United States and 41 other countries. The conference connects participants with service-learning leaders through three days of plenary sessions, featured forums, and service projects. It also provides access to new ideas and networking opportunities, with more than 200 workshops and countless opportunities for informal meetings. The next conference will be held in Albuquerque, N.M., March 27-31, 2007. Please visit www.nylc.org for more information.

About NYLC

NYLC has been at the center of community service and service-learning programs and policy development since 1983. It convenes The National Service-Learning Conference, which included representatives from 50 states and 41 countries in 2005. NYLC also offers adult and youth trainings, runs model programs, and develops service-learning curricula.

About Service-Learning

Service-learning is a teaching method that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service to their schools and communities and by integrating the process with established learning objectives. It emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving, and tackles real issues such as hunger, literacy, and disaster relief.

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