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Macy's Employees Dig Grant High School's Garden

SACRAMENTO – (April 28, 2008) As budgets in California shrink, the need for volunteers at community service agencies and non profit organizations is growing. A projected \$10 billion budget deficit for the state of California this year has agencies scrambling to make ends meet without cutting services.

Employees from the Macy's in Downtown Sacramento have decided to be more active and help the community with their own hands.

Andy Wasserman, the Partners in Time Coordinator who puts together the Macy's volunteer programs and activities, reached out to United Way staff to find a volunteer opportunity. They decided on going to Grant High School to help work in the garden.

"We wanted to come up with a green project to help celebrate Earth Week," Wasserman said. "We wanted to work in our community and I called the United Way office and they suggested coming out to the Grant High School garden. It was a perfect idea because it feels good to work with your hands, we were able to work with great kids and we got that psychological boost from helping out."

Assistant Store Manager Lori Landberg was one of about a dozen Macy's employees who went out to the Grant High School garden to help the students of GEO (Grant's Environmental Organization) tend to the garden where several vegetables, flowers and fruit trees are growing.

The volunteers were introduced to the garden and the program by teacher Anne Marie Kennedy, but the students took it from there. Volunteers worked in several groups that were led by students, clearing a garden bed, cutting fava beans off the plant, bringing soil to the beds and a myriad of other duties that the students perform on a daily basis.

"The students are very intelligent and very kind," Landberg said. "I'm very glad we came out here because I feel like it's important to work within the community and it was a great team building experience for our group."

United Way California Capital Region's Volunteer Solutions has become a valuable resource for agencies and volunteers alike. Agencies can log into the website and post the volunteer positions available. Volunteers then can sign up for the opportunities that fit them best.

"Lately we've received more requests from companies asking about opportunities for group volunteer outings and I think that's a trend that will continue," Volunteer Solutions Coordinator Rae-

Nani Stokes said. “Volunteer Solutions is a great way to connect businesses and their employees with our agencies in an effort to help build a stronger community.”

For more information on Volunteer Solutions, contact Rae-Nani Stokes at (916) 856-3989 or at rstokes@uwccr.org or log on to the Volunteer Solutions website at: www.yourlocalunitedway.org/volunteer

United Way California Capital Region is an independent local affiliate of United Way of America and works with nonprofit partners to create lasting results on local community issues through local United Way Projects: Coverage for Kids, Foster Youth Flourish, Keeping Kids Safe and Turning Teens Toward Success. Governed by a local board of volunteer directors, United Way partners with nearly 750 employers in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties to raise money through workplace giving campaigns for United Way Projects and nonprofit partners. For more information, visit www.yourlocalunitedway.org.