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News Release

Major League baseball players award \$150,000 in grants to Volunteers of America programs serving the needy

Washington, DC –Major League baseball players presented \$150,000 in grants from the Major League Baseball Players Trust to five Volunteers of America programs that further the organization’s mission to strengthen communities and build better lives for those in need. A total of \$580,000 has been provided by the Players Trust to dozens of Volunteers of America programs across the U.S. since the first grants were given in 2003. Additionally, the Players Trust has contributed more than one-million dollars to help Volunteers of America programs serving the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast region.

Charles Gould, national president and chief executive officer of Volunteers of America, said, “It’s wonderful to see the many accomplishments that Volunteers of America and the Major League Baseball Players Trust have built together over the years. Thousands of people have benefited from the Trust’s generosity and we look forward to adding even more accomplishments in the future.”

“It’s an honor for Major Leaguers to award grants from the Players Trust to Volunteers of America to help their local offices improve the lives others,” said Mark Loretta, a Trustee of the Players Trust and Los Angeles Dodgers infielder. “Working together, Major Leaguers and Volunteers of America are committed to serving people in need, and we encourage others to do the same.”

This year’s winning programs received Players Trust grants ranging in size from \$20,000 to \$50,000, which were presented by the Major League Players Trust on June 8 at Volunteers of America’s National Conference in Washington, DC. The five programs serve thousands of people in all regions of the United States:

- **Volunteers of America Minnesota, school nutrition for at-risk students:** Funding from the Players Trust will be used over the next three years to provide healthy, nutritionally balanced “food packs” to 200 low-income, at-risk – and in some cases, homeless – students attending Volunteers of America Minnesota’s alternative high school programs. Many of the students come from some of the poorest, toughest, inner-city neighborhoods in the state; and they often live off the breakfast and lunch they receive during the school day. This program will ensure they have enough food to make it through the weekend and through nights where they don’t know where dinner is coming.
- **Volunteers of America Oregon, Teen Program, Portland, Ore.:** Funds from the Players Trust will be used to expand an existing Teen Program in middle and high schools in Portland. The goals of the program are to prevent

violence and to support teens who have previously experienced, or are currently experiencing, violence. Through monthly meetings, support groups, one-on-one advocacy services, a mentor program and a teen specific Web site, this innovative program will help create an improved community where teens know how to communicate, treat each other with respect and understand healthy relationship dynamics. This grant can achieve a major impact by reaching more than 8,200 teens in middle and high schools over the next two years.

- **Volunteers of America Illinois, Words Travel:** The grant will be used to expand parenting education and job skills training for incarcerated mothers in Volunteers of America's Words Travel program. The negative impact of incarceration on families and children is profound and long-term. The program will provide services that recognize the needs of incarcerated mothers, placing strong emphasis on engagement and taking a holistic approach to family strengthening. The funds will focus on efforts helping women through mentoring, life skills, peer support groups and employment-readiness workshops.
- **Volunteers of America Texas, Life Enrichment Center, Euless, Tex.:** The grant will be used to develop a new Life Enrichment Center. The center will be a day rehabilitation program designed to provide a safe, engaging and interactive setting where persons with developmental disabilities can acquire and strengthen their skills for independent living. Some activities will include music and movement, physical fitness, outdoor learning, wellness, and vocational employment skills. For these clients, the Life Enrichment Center will open up a world of opportunities they may never have had before: the opportunity to develop friendships, to gain confidence in interacting in the public arena, to find a hobby they are passionate about and to feel the self-worth that comes from productive work.
- **Volunteers of America Wisconsin, Summit House, Waukesha, Wis.:** The grant will be used to purchase a minivan for Summit House – a community-based residential facility that specializes in the needs of individuals with chronic mental illness and/or developmental disabilities. Currently, Summit House utilizes a Honda Civic to take residents to activities in the community, doctor appointments and social outings. A minivan, with the capacity to transport all six residents and one staff member at once, will greatly improve the ability of the program to meet the individual needs of its clients.

Volunteers of America has partnered with the Major League Baseball Players Trust since 2002. The centerpiece of this relationship is the Action Team program, which encourages young people throughout the United States to volunteer in their communities. Action Teams, consisting of Major League Baseball players and Team Captains from area high schools, work together in cities nationwide to encourage young people to get involved in their communities by volunteering.

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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS TRUST

The Major League Baseball Players Trust partnered with Volunteers of America in 2002 to promote the nurturing and well-being of America's children and their families. The partnership features the personal involvement of Major League baseball players and their families with a variety of programs conducted by Volunteers of America throughout the United States. Also, together they administer the Action Team, a national youth volunteer program currently inspiring the next generation of volunteers in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Maui, Minneapolis, Mobile, New York City, Oakland, Philadelphia, Portland (ME), San Francisco, San Juan, Santa Fe, Seattle, Tampa and Washington D.C.. For more information about the Major League Baseball Players Trust, visit www.MLBPLAYERS.com and visit the Players Trust Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/MLBPlayersTrust> on You Tube.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit, faith-based organization dedicated to helping those in need live healthy, safe and productive lives. Since 1896, our ministry of service has supported and empowered America's most vulnerable groups, including seniors, people with disabilities, at-risk youth, men and women returning from prison, homeless individuals and families, those recovering from addictions and many others. Through hundreds of human service programs, including housing and healthcare, Volunteers of America helps more than 2 million people in over 400 communities. We offer a variety of services for older Americans, in particular, that allow them to maintain their independence and quality of life – everything from an occasional helping hand to full-time care. Our work touches the mind, body, heart and ultimately the spirit of those we serve, integrating our deep compassion with highly effective programs and services. For more information about Volunteers of America, visit www.VolunteersofAmerica.org.