

Johnson right to pitch volunteerism - MAYOR KNOWS FROM EXPERIENCE THE VALUE OF GIVING ONE'S TIME

Sacramento Bee, The (CA) - Saturday, June 27, 2009

Here's one area where Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson has been focused, persistent and effective: encouraging volunteerism .

He set a goal in March of making Sacramento the nation's leading city for volunteerism . He repeated that goal again on Tuesday -- and announced progress.

He's done public service announcements. He's gone to meetings of Sacramento's corporate volunteer council to tell businesses that employee volunteering programs are important. He's out telling kids that service is important.

He is convincing because he has lived a service ethic himself. Giving back to the community is in Johnson 's core. And, as Kathy Chow of Hands On Sacramento has said, this "drives people to step it up."

The mayor also understands the power of " the ask." People are more likely to volunteer if they're asked. So he's asking every resident to donate 10 hours each year. And Volunteer Sacramento provides an easy way to people to find opportunities and log hours (see www.volunteersac.com).

With the Obama family encouraging community service, young people especially have gotten excited about volunteerism . College students in our region volunteer at rates well above the national average.

Currently, 26 percent of those ages 16 and over in the Sacramento metropolitan area volunteer, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service. The top-ranked metropolitan area in the nation is Minneapolis-St. Paul, with more than 39 percent volunteering. In California, the Sacramento metropolitan area is behind San Francisco, San Diego and San Jose.

So the goal of reaching No. 1 is a stretch goal. Beyond " the ask," Johnson understands that you need to recognize people who serve. On Tuesday, he recognized 95-year-old Raynia Kinniston, who has logged 45,000 hours of service since 1960.

She's a great recruiter, too: "I wish that anyone who has any spare time , I would say volunteer," she said. Keep on asking and Sacramento can get to No. 1 in the nation.

Memo: EDITORIALS / Views of the editorial board

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: EDITORIALS

Page: A20

Index Terms: EDITORIAL

Record Number: SAC_0405266100