

Volunteer Recognition Day  
Honoring  
AmeriCorps/InterACT Members  
North Mississippi Regional Center Volunteers  
Lafayette County Foster Grandparent Volunteers

Wednesday, April 12, 200  
10:00 a.m.

I am pleased to be here today to honor the many  
volunteers of the North Mississippi Regional Center.

I am glad that you invited me to speak with you as  
you recognize the many men and women who give  
freely of their time to help others.

Recognizing and thanking volunteers is particularly  
close to my heart because I have recently taken on  
the responsibility of being the spokesperson for the

## State of Mississippi's President's Student Service Challenge Scholarship Program.

I was asked to serve as the spokesperson for this program, and after I reviewed what great opportunities it provides for the students of Mississippi, I could only say yes, with great enthusiasm.

This program provides an opportunity for high schools to make available a \$1,000 scholarship to students who perform outstanding service to the community.

In addition to junior and senior level students being eligible for the \$1,000 scholarships, all students from kindergarten through college who contribute at least 100 hours of service to the community are eligible for the President's Student Service Award.

Community service is so important to the future of our state. By teaching our young people the importance of giving back to their communities, we are making a positive impact on the direction of our state's future. Our children can make such a difference by working in their schools, churches, communities and cities as they learn the value of volunteerism

I also would like to share with you a personal story about a friend of mine who has benefited first-hand from the foster grandparents program. This woman was the mother of a profoundly retarded child named Margaret. When she was born, doctors said that Margaret was only expected to live to the age of 12. Upon her arrival to the Georgia Mental Retardation Center, Margaret was assigned a foster grandmother who she had for 15 years.

Her foster grandmother spent 4 hours a day with Margaret. She made sure that Margaret had the things that she needed. She made sure that Margaret's hair was combed, teeth were brushed, that she had plenty

to eat and plenty to drink. If Margaret got sick, she knew immediately that she was not feeling well. She notified the nurses so that the appropriate measures could be taken to care for her, and she took her to the hospital when she needed extra care, which was fairly frequently. Margaret liked to ride in her wheelchair, and it was her foster grandmother who took extra time to make sure that Margaret was given those little extra things that made her happy. It was those little special things that always made her mother feel like she survived much longer than she was expected to because she had extreme tender love and care from her foster grandparent, the nurses and the other volunteers. I know that words cannot express the

wonderful feelings that my friend has toward Margaret's foster grandmother and for the foster grandparent program.

Those of you here today are making a difference in people's lives, and you already know the value of volunteerism. I thank you and congratulate you for your self-giving spirit.

Thank you.