

THE WHITE HOUSE

November 13, 2009

Dear Friends:

As you know, service is dear to my heart and has become my life's work in so many ways. Service has such far-reaching effects, enriching not only the lives of the people and communities being served, but also the lives of those engaged in service. That is why I am so thrilled to see people all across the country volunteering their time, their talent, and their energy to make a difference.

Community service plays an integral role in empowering people and strengthening our communities. By giving us the opportunity to connect with our neighbors, service becomes the cornerstone of true citizenship. An individual act of service – no matter how big or how small – is never an isolated event. Each one builds upon the last, and the cumulative effect can be a powerful force for change. And that is how we bolster the very idea of America – that each of us can shape a better future for ourselves, our communities, and our country.

The President is committed to expanding service opportunities and his Administration is working hard to strengthen community-oriented programs across the country. The bipartisan passage of the Serve America Act demonstrates the commitment of all those in Washington. But more importantly, the act itself will support all Americans with a passion to serve in their efforts to give back.

As proud as I am of the work that happens every day across this great land, I know that there is still much more to be done. We are at a critical moment in our Nation's history, and we need an all-hands-on-deck approach to solve the problems that we face. So I urge all Americans to continue to volunteer, to innovate, to dream big, and to keep striving to find ways to create a better tomorrow.

America needs your hands, your hearts and your hard work now more than ever. History tells us that when we come together as a Nation with a sense of purpose and a spirit of service, no challenge is too great.

Thank you for doing just that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Obama". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.