



# **PROPOSAL TO**

## **The 2010 National Volunteer Assembly**

**Presented by:**  
**Patti Davis, Director Inbound Sponsored Programs**  
**March, 2010**

### **CORE TEAM MEMBERS:**

Patti Davis, Director, Inbound Sponsored Programs, AFS-USA  
Holly Dowe, World Flags, 920 887-3117  
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### **OTHERS CONSULTED:**

- The Sponsored Programs Advisory Group, members of the Returnee Initiative, staff representatives from all departments within AFS, volunteers from across the country.

## **PART 1: MOTION SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST**

### **MOTION**

The AFS Service Workgroups moves to adopt AFS Youth Service Day & Picnic as an annual national event to fall on the Saturday of Global Youth Service Weekend with the purpose of raising visibility for AFS locally; building bridges to the community; fostering relationships among AFS constituents and revitalizing the local AFS network.

### **ACTION DESIRED FROM NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ASSEMBLY**

We request approval of this motion so that the first nationwide AFS Youth Service Day & Picnic will take place in April 2011.

### **BACKGROUND OF MOTION**

#### **AFS Youth Service Day & Picnic**

Imagine, one day a year AFS participants everywhere--hosted students, host families, students preparing to go abroad, natural families, volunteers, AFS Returnees, staff, etc. don their AFS T shirts and join others in their community for a day of fun and community service. Here in the US, this literally translates to tens of thousands of community service hours accomplished within one day! AFS Youth Service Day raises awareness for AFS in the communities where we recruit our volunteers, students and host families. It puts a 'face' to AFS and gives people who have not connected with us in a long time an opportunity to get to know AFS for a day in a fun way. And, it provides us with an opportunity to join arms and give back to the organizations, schools, and others who support the AFS Mission as well as forge new relationships in our communities. For many AFS communities, it could be a newsworthy event, getting AFS in the news at a peak time in our program cycle when we need to raise our visibility.

One important reason why AFS-USA volunteers should adopt this project for AFS Youth Service Day can be found in our AFS Brand Promise, "**AFS helps to build a global community based on intercultural connections that positively affect the world.**" AFS Youth Service Day creates a bridge between our AFS international community and our local communities. Successful implementation of AFS Youth Service Days around the country have the potential to support several planks of the AFS-USA business plan --- enhancing our volunteer capacity, improving hosting quality and growing sending.

We suggest the annual date to be the Saturday of Global Youth Service Weekend, which in 2010 is April 24, which also coincides with the end of National Volunteer Week. The timing offers an opportunity for AFS to align itself with and be supported by the toolkits and resources made available

through Youth Service America. An AFS potluck picnic to cap the day can be an opportunity to thank volunteers, host families and natural families – all constituents - in celebration of National Volunteer Week and to raise awareness of the opportunities to get involved with AFS, as a participant, host family or volunteer.

There are several key areas in which AFS-USA needs to be successful in order to be a strong and healthy organization – we need more American young people to go abroad, more host families, more opportunities for young returnees to be engaged with AFS, more volunteers and supporters at the local level. This motion seeks to support the vibrancy of AFS at its most critical level, in local communities. The local level is where all of the important work of AFS takes place and where the attraction of new volunteers, community supporters and participants in the form of host families and outbound participants must take place. The NVA is asked to support this by creating a national event one day per year dedicated to AFS awareness raising and community building.

Perhaps as important, an AFS Day of Service, aligned with Global Youth Service Day helps to underscore for ourselves and for the communities we serve, that AFS, the American Field Service, was born out of a commitment to voluntary service and that AFS is part of a movement dedicated to civic engagement and volunteerism.

**WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ADVANTAGES TO THE PROPOSED MOTION? WHY SHOULD THE NVA APPROVE THIS MOTION? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC – ADVANTAGES TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION, TO AREA TEAMS AND LOCAL CHAPTERS, AND TO INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED.**

- Awareness raising that will benefit sending, hosting and volunteer development.
- It will create an opportunity for the whole AFS community to come together and have fun, revitalizing the full constituency.
- It will open doors to new partnerships with other like-minded community groups.
- It provides a volunteer entry point for both young participants and returnees, as well as those who have limited time to devote to AFS.
- Because it is a very time-limited, specific event, it might serve as a project that those with limited experience volunteering, or a committee of young returnees could see as a “starter” AFS volunteering project. Providing a “starting point” event for new volunteers.

**WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST DISADVANTAGES TO THE PROPOSED MOTION? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC – DISADVANTAGES TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION, TO AREA TEAMS AND LOCAL CHAPTERS, AND TO INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED.**

- For busy area teams with full schedules of activity, it could be seen as another time-consuming task, unless it is used as means of widening the pool of volunteers engaged in AFS and coordinated with the existing event calendars (which might entail simply reshaping an already scheduled event to be part of the national service day).

**WHAT ARE THE TWO OR THREE BIGGEST CONCERNS THAT HAVE ARISEN REGARDING THE PROPOSED MOTION AND HOW IT MIGHT AFFECT THE LOCAL AFS UNITS AND/OR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS? HOW COULD THOSE CONCERNS BE ADDRESSED/RESOLVED?**

- The primary concern that has arisen is that volunteers feel that they have too much to do already and adding an annual event to the calendar will create additional strain. One way to address this concern is to hand over the organizing to returnees and other constituents that we don't typically approach – host parents, hosted participants, Americans preparing to depart and their families. This can be a terrific one-off volunteer job that can lead to bigger commitments down the road. Other resources to bear in mind are the templates and toolkits that have already been developed by Youth Service America. We don't have to reinvent the wheel. The groundwork has been laid.

**COST IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING THE MOTION**

- As a local, volunteer-driven movement, the AFS National Day of Service should not require significant staff resources. Toolkits for planning such projects are readily available from Youth Service America. Depending on the project, there may be some need to provide supplies for community service project (paint brushes, garbage bags, depending on project) and human resources dedicated to the planning. Hard costs of supplies may be mitigated by partnering with another community-based organization that may provide the supplies or by getting supplies donated. The picnic or BBQ, suggested to be a "pot luck" style would be along the same lines of many of our existing AFS pot-luck events (of course, having hosted students and returnees bring a dish from their country would add a nice AFS flair). Promotional materials, including brochures would be needed, but existing materials should be sufficient. It could be beneficial to have the support of the communications and marketing team to provide a targeted press release.

**PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TIMELINE**

Action	Timeframe for Completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion Approved</li> </ul>	NVA, April 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the launch is shared on Wiki and in various AFS newsletters to get people excited and thinking, planning for next year.</li> </ul>	May, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool kit designed for AFS Youth Service Day/AFS Picnic pulling from templates that already exist with Youth Service America, the organization that</li> </ul>	Fall, 2010

sponsors Global Youth Service Day	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Service Project Leaders and projects identified.</li> </ul>	December - February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A mapping program, identifying community service events and leaders across the country is pre-populated with the events that are ready to go.</li> </ul>	January, 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PR campaign surrounding community service events</li> </ul>	February – March 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Execution – Year 1</li> </ul>	April 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of successes and areas of improvement for 2012</li> </ul>	May 2011

### **PART 3: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

[www.youthserviceamerica.org](http://www.youthserviceamerica.org)

<http://gysd.org/>

### **PART 4: CONCLUSION**

By dedicating one day per year to awareness raising and community building, AFS will raise its profile locally, give something back to the community that supports AFS programs, spread the enthusiasm for AFS more broadly and tap the energy of young people (hosted participants, Americans preparing to go abroad, young returnees) who might otherwise not have an entry point to volunteering. There are opportunities for partnering with Youth Service America and with community-based organizations to further expand AFS' reach. The timing is such that hosted participants are currently on program, Americans who are going abroad have been selected and are preparing to depart. This event gives all of these constituents an opportunity to get to know and support one another. Host families and natural families will meet and network – perhaps inspiring natural families to become host families.

This is an opportunity to annually revitalize AFS at the local level, yet with national impact, and provide an occasion for the full AFS community to come together for something both fun and rewarding.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you vote to dedicate one day per year to AFS Community Service Day & Picnic.