

Forty-six years ago, President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps with the aim of enabling ordinary men and women to combat the debilitating effects of poverty, disease, and war in developing countries. More than 187,000 volunteers have served in 139 countries, and it is clear that the Peace Corps' impact has been truly extraordinary.

The leadership embodied in the Peace Corps Volunteers have helped farmers find new efficient methods for crop production, developed new business plans for economically depressed communities, and inspired countless children by acting as mentors and teachers. Their compassion and commitment to service have led to significant achievements in fostering improved understanding and strengthening the bonds of friendship.

Peace Corps Volunteers remain committed to addressing some of the world's most pressing problems today. These men and women have offered crucial assistance to communities struggling to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, to regions devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and to countries rebuilding after deadly tsunamis. For their brave service and dedication, these Volunteers deserve to be commended.

To date, the 6th District of California has produced almost 400 Peace Corps Volunteers, including the following 28 current volunteers: Troy A. Agron, who is working in Azerbaijan; Caron L. Alarab, Guinea; Carol A. Batz, Tonga; Libby A. Bersot, Botswana; Jennifer M. Busick, Bolivia; Eldon L. Christenson, Guinea; Rustin P. Crandall, Guyana; Joseph P. Deschenes, Albania; Tameron A. Eaton, Eastern Caribbean; Amil A. Gehrke, Georgia; Robyn M. Grahm, Honduras; Donald F. Hesse, Jordan; Jessica D. Holloway, Armenia; Connor J. Kamada, Senegal; Anna F. Kuhn, Tanzania; Abigail M. Lafrenz, Bulgaria; Bridget M. Leddy, Kyrgyzstan; Ana Alecia Lyman, Mozambique; Sydney F. McCall, Bolivia; Morgan C. Montgomery, Honduras; Laura M. Norton, Madagascar; Jordan M. Reeves, Panama; Uriah S. Reisman, Panama; Jacob E. Rich, Peru; Emily C. Ryan, China; Elicia F. Smith, Kenya; Katherine L. Theiss-Nyland, Malawi; Kyla H. Wall-Polin, Bulgaria.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to honor the 46th anniversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps and to celebrate the achievements of these passionate men and women who have succeeded in making our world more peaceful.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHRIS
MEYER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Chris Meyer, the Vice President of Convention Center Sales for the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

In his role with the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, Chris has effectively promoted and implemented important programs which have marketed Las Vegas as a trade show destination. As a result of his efforts through Trade Show Trade Mission, the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority has marketed Las Vegas as a destination for trade shows for organizations such as the Con-

sumer Electronics Show, the National Association of Broadcasters, Magic, and ConAg/ConExpo.

By helping to redefine Las Vegas as a trade show destination, Chris and the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority have increased Las Vegas tourism and revenue. As a result of Chris's Trade Mission, international tourism has increased as well. According to estimations, as a result of the Trade Missions to Brazil and China, an additional 3,000 Brazilian and Chinese tourists have visited the Las Vegas area. This alone has led to approximately \$4,515,000 of revenue for the Las Vegas area.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Chris Meyer and his many achievements. His dedication to the Las Vegas community is commendable and I wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, the promise of America means different things to different people. To some, it may represent better economic opportunities. To others, it is having access to a better education, better healthcare, or a better job. To still others, it is simply the chance for a better life.

But regardless of how we define the "promise of America," there is little doubt that Neighborhood Centers Inc.—Houston's largest and fastest-growing human services agency—is making that promise a reality for thousands of people in Southeast Texas. And the scope of that accomplishment is being underscored this month, as Neighborhood Centers celebrates its 100th anniversary of providing education, resources, and connections to the area's most vulnerable communities. Our Congressional District is served very well by Neighborhood Centers Inc.'s facilities and programs.

Founded in 1907 by Alice Graham Baker—the grandmother of former Secretary of State James Baker III—Neighborhood Centers Inc. stands as a shining example of how innovative strategies and consistency of purpose, animated by a heart as big as Texas, can produce truly transformational change.

From its inception, Neighborhood Centers has focused on helping underserved communities to achieve their full potential. The organization pursues this mission not by concentrating on the weaknesses of a neighborhood and its residents, but by building on the unique skills, strengths, resources, and capabilities that already exist. It then works to nurture these assets in order to create self-sufficiency, individual empowerment, and long-term economic and social development.

The result is a unique approach for connecting people with what they need to fully realize the promise of America: child and family care, education, job skills, entrepreneurial incubators, leadership development, legal assistance, after-school programs, citizenship services, teacher training, and activities for seniors that encourage aging in place.

The ability and willingness to provide these services have brought Neighborhood Centers

face to face with numerous challenges over the years. But challenges are not uncommon to the agency. It has traditionally been Houston's go-to organization when it comes to dealing with the region's most complex issues. As Angela Blanchard, president and CEO, once said: "The harder it is, the better we like it."

Neighborhood Centers' response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrates clearly that those are not mere words.

When the storm forced hundreds of thousands of New Orleans residents to flee to Houston, Neighborhood Centers created a special program called Stay Connected. It provided evacuees assistance in finding jobs, healthcare, homes, and other essential human needs. It worked to restore a sense of community for those who decided to make Houston their home. It helped rebuild lives, renew hope, and revitalize opportunity. To date, Stay Connected—which is largely staffed by Katrina victims—has served more than 4,000 families.

That brings me to my final point about Neighborhood Centers: This is an organization defined by compassion, concern, and commitment.

The agency and everyone involved with its mission—including corporate partners such as JPMorganChase, Shell, Chevron, and Aramark—share an unbounded faith in human potential.

They truly believe that people, when treated with respect and dignity and given a chance to grow and to build self-esteem, can have a profoundly positive impact on families, communities, and the entire social and economic fabric not only of Houston but of America as well. Potential is not just an abstract concept to Neighborhood Centers. It is a concrete foundation for touching lives, lifting hearts, and fulfilling promise.

Over the past 100 years, Neighborhood Centers has never sidestepped an opportunity—or avoided an obligation—to keep that potential alive. In doing so, it has not simply made the American Dream a reality. It has kept the Human Dream alive. I cannot think of a more significant contribution to this country to those who make it great.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF
ESTHER RENTERÍA

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend and fellow Californian, Esther Rentería, who passed away January 8, 2007, at her Montebello, California home at the age of 67. Esther was a skilled journalist who was committed to increasing the presence of Latinos in broadcast media.

For decades, Esther advocated to increase the numbers of Latinos in the news and other television programs. She understood the importance of Latino children watching people on television who looked like them and could relate to them. Esther's endless advocacy and enthusiasm helped increase and positively modify the presence of Latinos in the media.

In 1969, Esther was the first Latina to appear in a nightly newscast with the premiere of "Ahora!" on KCET-TV, and in 1970 she

worked as an associate producer on "The Sistema Is Over," a series based on issues relevant to the daily lives of Latinos in the U.S. In 1986, she cofounded the National Hispanic Media Coalition, an organization that monitors Federal Communications Commission regulations on broadcast media. The organization successfully petitioned the FCC to revoke broadcast licenses of those television stations who neglected to hire a sufficient number of Latinos.

Esther's work did not end with her behind-the-scenes efforts to make Latinos more visible on national TV. She also founded the Hispanic Americans for Fairness in Media to award scholarships to young students who aspire to future careers in media. Esther's advocacy on behalf of the Latino community has been instrumental to the changes that have taken effect since. Esther is survived by her husband, Martin Rentería, former chief of police for the Montebello Unified District's police department, four sons, and a sister.

I extend my sympathy to Esther's husband, children, and family. She will be missed dearly.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2007, I was unavoidably detained and thus I missed rollcall vote No. 110. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on H.R. 556, the National Security Foreign Investment Reform and Strengthened Transparency Act.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MR. TIM SNOW

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend Tim Snow for his long and distinguished career at Thomas & Mack Development Group.

Tim began his work with the Thomas & Mack Development Group in California during the mid-1980s and soon after moved to Las Vegas where he was instrumental in implementing extensive land development projects. Tim is responsible for developing a 100-acre area of land near McCarren International Airport into the McCarren Center. Today, the McCarren Center is comprised of 30 buildings and nearly 2 million square feet of office and light industrial space.

During his tenure at Thomas & Mack Development, Mr. Snow also developed a 20-acre ranch which today stands as the headquarters for Harrah's Entertainment. While with the Thomas & Mack Development Group, Mr. Snow oversaw the development of the Blue Diamond Ranches, the Eastgate Plaza, and the Nevada Financial Center. Mr. Snow also shares an ownership position in the important 100-acre Northern Beltway Industrial Center. Throughout his long and illustrious career with

the Thomas & Mack Development Group, Tim has guided the expansion of the Las Vegas Valley and his vision has led to the development of a mature business and thriving community.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor my good friend Tim Snow. His dedication to the Las Vegas community is commendable and I applaud his distinguished record of success. I wish him the best in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I would like to state for the record my position on the following votes I missed due to reasons beyond my control.

On Monday, March 5, 2007, I had to tend to some family matters and thus missed rollcall votes 119 and 120. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all votes.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES OF ODESSA BROWN

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, it is an honor and privilege that I rise today to recognize Odessa Juanita Brown for her achievements and milestones as she celebrated her 85th birthday on March 1, 2007. I have known Odessa for most of my life. She and her husband Frank, and their children lived on Cimarron Street, in Los Angeles, and my family lived around the corner—that date's back to the late-1950s. Our families have remained in contact since then.

Odessa Brown has remained a committed community servant, participant in civic and fraternal groups, and an active church member over that 50-year period. She has been a member of Trinity Baptist Church for 61 years; a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Chapter Alpha Gamma Omega of Los Angeles, California, the same Chapter of which I am a member, for 25 years; and a volunteer at the election polls for the last 20 years. Odessa has been Worthy Matron of Skylight Chapter 51 of the Eastern Star and was a member of the NAACP. Today she is taking computer technology classes at Santa Monica Emeritus College. Not enough of a role model, yet? Well, Odessa has maintained an exercise routine of walking a mile almost every day for more than two decades—including hills, by the way.

Odessa Brown's leadership skills, her commitment to service, and her creative talents have been a true lifetime blessing to her family and community. She served as a Brownie and Girl Scout leader of her daughters' troops. She used her artistry to design and sew her daughters' beautiful handmade dresses when they were small. Everyone knew the three Brown girls because of their uniquely crafted dresses.

Odessa's culinary talents are also memorable, and family, friends, visitors have craved her cooking from coast to coast. She has creatively hosted small and large family dinners and barbeques, and cooked for neighborhood block parties and festivals. Her "monkey bread," oh, yes, that monkey bread—is the most desired food at all family gatherings.

Odessa is a dedicated and devout Christian, and her church continues to be important part of her life. She and her husband, Frank, joined Trinity Baptist Church in 1946, the year they were married. She has been an active member since. Their five children—Marion, Gwen, Kathleen, Frank, and Reginald—grew up in Trinity. Her grandson, James, attends Trinity, and her other grandchildren, who live outside Los Angeles—Cameron, Brian, Rachel, Charesse, Kahlil, Imani, and Camara—have visited. Odessa's great grandchildren, Cameron and Ciera, are expected to one day be the fourth generation to worship at Trinity. Odessa is a Deaconess and is a longtime member of the Gospel Choir, which was directed by the late Inez Caston. Odessa regularly and lovingly still participates in church projects.

Odessa was born in Lewisville, Arkansas, on March 1, 1922, and Frank was born in Stamps, Arkansas. They joined the church not long after they had moved to Los Angeles. They were part of the great war-era migration of African Americans from the south to the north and west.

Odessa was the fifth child of Annie and Joe Brown. She had three brothers—Joseph, Clarence (deceased), and Cleant, and three sisters, Mary (deceased), Bernice (deceased), and Margie. The church was an important part of their community and Odessa was baptized at Galilee Baptist Church in Lewisville at 11 years of age.

From a young child, Odessa was extremely creative, artistic, and talented, whether she was in the kitchen helping her mother bake or designing and sewing outfits for her dolls. She started cooking at the age of seven and her teacher was her sister, Mary. When her parents attended church, they would return to a fantastic meal. Her parents were surprised to find out that she was the genius behind the great family meals. Her mother taught her how to sew and she quickly picked up the skill. She always helped her Mom around the house.

Odessa's parents were extremely resourceful. The Brown family understood the value of land ownership. Annie Brown's family was considered middle class, and they owned land. She inherited river land from her parents, which is still owned by the Brown Family, and she and her husband, Joe, purchased land together, as well. Joe was a hard working, proud farmer who raised his seven kids with the proceeds from the land. He grew corn, cotton, truck patches (watermelon), and raised animals (chickens, hogs and cows). He marketed his own products and sold direct to consumers. He also showcased his animals at conventions and fairs.

He was a chef and cooked at clubhouses, and was known for another unique skill—making ice cream. He sold his produce and ice cream at church conventions, and his fondness for making ice cream was passed down to Odessa, who developed homemade ice cream as a specialty. Annie also was an entrepreneur and learned how to use a pressure