



United Way  
of Thurston County



**Volunteer Center**  
of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For more information contact:**

Ami Forsberg, Day of Caring Coordinator  
360-943-2773, x13 or [aforsberg@unitedway-thurston.org](mailto:aforsberg@unitedway-thurston.org)

### **Small Businesses Benefit from United Way's 2008 Day of Caring**

Hope Smith, office manager for Engineered Software in Lacey, believed so deeply in the work she did during last year's Day of Caring event that her employer added a day of paid leave for community service to the company's employee benefit package.

"We came back to work dirty from pulling ivy," Smith said. She enjoyed the day's work and learned what a difference her contribution made toward preserving natural plants choked by the invasive plants.

United Way of Thurston County's 16th annual Day of Caring is Sept.12. One can sign up to volunteer for a hands-on project through the Volunteer Center of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties at [www.volunteer.ws](http://www.volunteer.ws). Sara Ballard, executive director of the Volunteer Center hopes more businesses will follow Engineered Software's lead.

Day of Caring is an annual event where hundreds of volunteers from throughout Thurston County join local nonprofit and other community organizations to work on service projects. Participating organizations are matched with volunteers who donate their services to change our community for the better in one day. Not only does Day of Caring have a significant impact on the needs of local nonprofits, it also enables volunteers to meet new people, work as a team and gain new experiences. Day of Caring also kicks off United Way's 2008 campaign with a goal to raise \$1.4 million to help meet local health and human service needs.

"As small business budgets for training and team-building shrink, a day of volunteering can fill that niche and create positive publicity at the same time," Ballard said. "We hope to see more small businesses pitching in on this day of service."

[www.unitedway-thurston.org](http://www.unitedway-thurston.org)

1211 Fourth Avenue East, Suite 101 Olympia, WA 98506  
360.943.2773 phone / 360.943.2777 fax

Businesses both large and small see the benefits of volunteerism among their employees. Day of Caring not only boosts morale for current employees, but can also make the company more attractive to future employees, when the economy allows for hiring again. Studies show the next generation of workers, known as “Millenials” value volunteering and expect the company they work for to give back to the community.

Smith said she knows the spirit of community service is very important to people of her son’s generation. In fact, it was her son’s interest in helping his community that inspired her to volunteer. “That’s when I became really aware,” Smith said. “It was through my young son.”

If your business is interested in volunteering for a Day of Caring project, visit [www.volunteer.ws](http://www.volunteer.ws) or call 360-741-2625 or email [sara@volunteer.ws](mailto:sara@volunteer.ws) for more information.

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