



News Release

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COLLEGE STUDENTS RECEIVE PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD AT USCIS VOLUNTEER AND CIVICS ORIENTATION SESSION

LOS ANGELES - The Project SHINE (Students Helping In the Naturalization of Elders) chapter at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) today received the President's Volunteer Service Award for helping older immigrants learn English and prepare to become United States citizens. The awards were presented during a meeting at Los Angeles City College hosted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the White House Office of USA Freedom Corps to encourage individuals to volunteer to help legal immigrants become more actively engaged in their communities.

Since 2001, 564 CSUF Project SHINE students have volunteered more than 11,000 hours of service to 1,071 older immigrants. A CSUF student and a volunteer coordinator at Los Angeles City College were also recognized for their individual accomplishments.

"We all benefit from the generosity of others, and these volunteers are an inspiration for others to follow," said Alfonso Aguilar, Chief of USCIS' Office of Citizenship. "They have made serving the immigrant community a key part of their lives, and by helping their neighbors, they also help our nation."

"Today's awards recognize the exceptional accomplishments of these college students who have answered the call to service by helping older immigrants learn English and assimilate into American society," added Katie Loovis, Associate Director of the White House Office of USA Freedom Corps.

Aguilar demonstrated the zip-code based web search tool of the Task Force on New Americans that lists volunteer opportunities to teach English, American history and civics, or help a new immigrant settle in his or her new American community. Following the meeting, Mr. Aguilar taught a citizenship class using the new USCIS video, *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*, and engaged the students in a discussion using the lesson plan in the accompanying booklet.

The video focuses on the history and founding of our nation and the important rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, while highlighting the contributions of immigrants throughout our history. The booklet provides an overview of the video's concepts and contains additional resources to help prepare immigrants for citizenship. The booklet can be used for self-study or as a tool to lead group discussion in English as a Second Language and citizenship preparation classes.

The video and booklet are one of the free training resources USCIS provides to public libraries, adult educators, volunteers and others who work with immigrants. Another resource is the Civics and Citizenship Toolkit, which contains a variety of educational tools to help immigrants embrace the common core of American civic culture, learn English and fully become American.

For more information about the initiatives of the Task Force on New Americans, please visit www.WelcometoUSA.gov/aboutus, the federal government's official website for new immigrants. For information about partnerships to benefit immigrants through Project SHINE at CSUF, please visit the webpage: <http://campusapps.fullerton.edu/cisl/Shine/Index.htm>.