

**For Immediate Release**  
**April 24, 2008**

**CONTACT: Marta Bortner**  
**(916) 327-4050**

## **Maria Shriver and CaliforniaVolunteers Introduce an Online Disaster Preparedness Program: WE Prepare**

### ***Los Angeles-Area Pilot Designed to Make Disaster Planning Easier for Local Families***

Sacramento – First Lady Maria Shriver and CaliforniaVolunteers, the lead state office responsible for coordinating volunteer activities, today introduced a first-of-its-kind online disaster preparedness effort focused on the greater Los Angeles area: WE Prepare. The WE Prepare program is designed to motivate families to take action and get prepared for both natural and man-made disasters.

“As a mother of four children, I realize how important it is that WE Prepare for disasters as a family,” said Maria Shriver. “We cannot afford to wait for the next disaster to hit before we take steps to Get Ready! I encourage families to visit [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://CaliforniaVolunteers.org) and download the WE Prepare tools today so everyone will know what to do before the next disaster strikes.”

WE Prepare features easy-to-use disaster preparedness tools on [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://CaliforniaVolunteers.org), such as:

- a customizable children’s story designed to teach children how to be disaster prepared in a fun, non-threatening way;
- a fill-in-the-blank family plan that tells families where to meet if they have to evacuate, who they’ve identified as an out-of-state “family contact,” how to get emergency information in their community and how to take care of their family’s unique needs such as infants, seniors and pets;
- a risk assessment to help determine a family’s current level of preparedness.

Since 1950, 255 states of emergency have been proclaimed in California. Since 1989, there have been 27 major declared disasters. Despite this threat of unexpected disasters, less than half of Californians have a disaster plan. WE Prepare is designed to make it easy for families to take the necessary steps to become disaster ready.

“California is a disaster-prone state – a state where wildfires, earthquakes, winter storms and even man-made disasters can happen without warning,” said Karen Baker, Governor Schwarzenegger’s newly-appointed secretary of service and volunteering. “When families are well prepared, they can become part of the solution so disaster workers can focus on those most in need.”

As part of the Los Angeles-area WE Prepare disaster preparedness pilot program, CaliforniaVolunteers has created a “Moms Brigade,” a group of more than 100 mom advocates who are charged with spreading the word to other moms about the importance of being disaster prepared. These moms are empowering fellow moms and their families to visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org) and complete a family disaster plan.

The WE Prepare disaster preparedness initiative will initially be piloted in the greater Los Angeles area during the month of April. By the end of 2008, CaliforniaVolunteers plans to expand the initiative statewide.

For more information about WE Prepare or to join the Moms Brigade today, visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org).

## **ABOUT CALIFORNIAVOLUNTEERS**

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program, California Citizen Corps and the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning. Through the innovative Web site, [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://CaliforniaVolunteers.org), individuals and families can find more than 40,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation’s first state cabinet secretary of service and volunteering leads the organization and First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chairperson. For more information, please visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org).

### **Maria Shriver**

Maria Shriver believes “It’s All About WE” and in the transformative power of working together to achieve a positive legacy for California. Through her innovative WE programs and initiatives, Shriver has issued calls to action that have resounded across the state, enlisting Californians to solve critical issues together. “It’s All About WE” represents Shriver’s boldly creative, nurturing and entrepreneurial vision for California. For more information about “It’s All About WE,” go to [www.FirstLady.ca.gov](http://www.FirstLady.ca.gov).