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## Volunteer as a Family to Teach Young Children Compassion

*Primrose Schools Offers Four Simple Steps for Holiday Community Service*

**ATLANTA (Nov. 16, 2010)** – Many of today's parents are committed to raising their children to become compassionate adults who want to help others. They are looking for good ways to encourage character development but may not know how or when to begin.

"Giving back is especially top-of-mind around the holidays, so this is a good time to start a year-round habit with your young children," said Dr. Mary Zurn, vice president of education and professional development, Primrose Schools. "Volunteering plays an important role in the development of character. It teaches children that they can do things that positively impact the world around them. Even young children can learn to become active participants in their communities."

With more than 40 years of experience in early childhood education, Dr. Zurn oversees the development of the Primrose Schools Balanced Learning® curriculum, which places a special emphasis on character development. She offers parents four key steps to start their children volunteering in a meaningful way:

**Step 1: Clarify your personal goals and motives for wanting to include your child in volunteer activities.** Volunteering is a wonderful way to share your values with your child. Pick a cause that is meaningful to you and your family rather than one that is simply convenient.

**Step 2: Explain the importance of volunteerism and the contribution volunteers can make.** A child's favorite question is "why?" Keep your answers simple and concrete. For example, if you are going to volunteer at the food bank, tell your child that "The food bank has lots of food for people who need it, and it will be our job to sort the food so that people are able to find what they need."

**Step 3: Choose volunteer activities to do with your children that are age-appropriate.** Children as young as three can begin volunteering. At this age they are better able to enjoy participation in group activities and follow directions. Remember that a preschooler's concept of the world is not very large and is usually limited primarily to their home, neighborhood and school. It's important to keep the activity within the realm of what they can imagine.

**Step 4: Find a child-friendly not-for-profit.** When selecting a volunteer opportunity, ask questions to determine if it's the right fit for your family. Does the organization have experience with and a history of successfully working with children and families? Will the organization provide a reference from another family who has volunteered with them? Does the organization conduct appropriate background screenings on its staff? Does the organization have insurance if there is an accident while your family is volunteering?

Additional parenting tips from Dr. Zurn on raising compassionate children are available on [www.DrZandMe.com](http://www.DrZandMe.com).

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### **About Primrose Schools**

Founded in 1982, Primrose Schools is the nation's leader in providing consistent, accredited early childhood education and child care services in more than 200 schools in 15 states. Primrose School's foundation is based on a dedicated and passionate group of early childhood professionals providing high quality education with a balance of learning, character development and play.

Primrose School's Balanced Learning® Curriculum blends teacher-directed and child-initiated activities and is consistently delivered in all Primrose Schools nationwide. This exclusive curriculum is standards-based and enables teachers to help children build a foundation of knowledge and skills that will enable them to move successfully from one level of development to the next. Primrose is the first preschool organization in the country to achieve the gold standard in educational accreditation from AdvancED and to require all of its schools to become SACS CASI or NCA CASI accredited.

For more information, visit [www.primroseschools.com](http://www.primroseschools.com).