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Volunteering website launches for v-inspired young people

v, the independent charity set up to encourage young people to volunteer, has launched a brand new web-based portal to act as a central gateway for volunteering information and guidance which also offers easy access to local volunteering opportunities. The site - www.vinspired.com – has been designed specifically for 16 to 25 year olds in England, and incorporates a host of social networking features and user-generated content to provide an unrivalled destination for young people interested in volunteering.

v is led by the cares, interests, passions and beliefs of young people and members of the v20 Youth Advisory Board have been involved with every stage of the design, development and implementation of the site. v20 member Sarah Ford, who is the portal 'Champion' says: "I've loved being involved in creating the portal and I'm looking forward to seeing how the site develops as more and more people share their blogs, images and video clips. It's a great place to find out about volunteering experiences and I'm sure there will be many funny and unusual stories that show how exciting and diverse volunteering can be. It's fantastic that even in the test phase of the site we have attracted more than 2,000 young people to register, 66% of whom are new to volunteering".

Commenting on the launch, v's Chief Executive Terry Ryall said: "The creation of a national volunteering portal to ensure that young people have ready access to information on volunteering opportunities was one of the key recommendations of the Russell Commission. I'm delighted that by working closely with young people, YouthNet and others in the sector, we have been able to deliver a truly interactive, youth-focussed site that we believe will make a real difference for young people."

v has worked in close partnership with online charity YouthNet to implement the portal's volunteering opportunity search, building upon the existing voluntary sector infrastructure. v has funded a number of changes to the National Volunteering Database (NVD), V-Base and Online Poster System and the do-it.org.uk volunteering site, all of which are owned and managed by YouthNet. The NVD provides the primary source of volunteering opportunities searchable by young people using vinspired.com. Enhanced features such as saved search preferences and

automated alerts are being trialled to make finding the right opportunity even easier. Lesley Bourne, Director of Partnerships at YouthNet, said: "YouthNet believes in working in partnership in order to develop complimentary services that play on the strengths of all involved. We are delighted to be working strategically with v to share our knowledge of young people, volunteering and technology to support this exciting initiative."

In addition to the vinspired website, young people can access volunteering information using a freephone number (0800 089 9000) and via SMS by texting v to 80010. Additional functionality will be added to the site throughout 2007, with increased access planned via mobile devices, kiosks and interactive television.

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Notes to Editors

- v is the new youth volunteering charity launched in May 2006 whose mission is to inspire a million more young volunteers in England aged 16-25.
- The charity was set up to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission outlining a new national framework for youth action and engagement, following a nationwide consultation which included 6000 young people.
- v is led by the cares, interests, passions and beliefs of young people. A Youth Advisory Board made up of twenty young people called v20 is involved in all aspects of the charity's work. Four members of v20 sit on v's Board of Trustees.
- v works with and builds upon the current voluntary sector infrastructure, funds the creation of volunteering opportunities through grants rounds and implements programmes to create awareness and positive understanding of volunteering for young people.
- v has been formed as an independent charity using an innovative new model which allows funds raised from the private sector to be matched by the Government. Up to £50 million has been allocated by the Government for this purpose over the next three years. For more information on v, please visit www.wearev.com
- YouthNet is an online charity - founded by broadcaster Martyn Lewis in 1995 – which exists to create a socially inclusive environment where all young adults are engaged, informed and inspired to achieve their ambitions and dreams. YouthNet actively listens to young people, empowers them to speak out and works with them to take action on the issues that they say affect them. YouthNet aims to inspire young people, earn their trust and respect and support them with empathy as they seek out their place in the world.
- YouthNet owns and operates the National Volunteering Database, V-Base and Online Poster System used across the voluntary sector, the volunteering site www.do-it.org.uk and www.thesite.org, which helps young people (16-24 year-olds) in the UK by providing emotional support, options and signposting to relevant experts on issues such as money, sex, drugs, housing, relationships, health and law.
- For more information on YouthNet please visit www.youthnet.org
- vinspired.com has been developed for v by Connect Internet Solutions. For more information, please visit www.connectinternetsolutions.com