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California Polytechnic State University

June 2, 2003

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly President Awards Volunteer Service of Students, Faculty, Staff

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly students, faculty and staff who bring nutrition lessons to Central Coast elementary school classrooms, care for the community's AIDS memorial grove, train local women in self defense, and visit to seniors in assisted living centers were among those honored May 29 at the ninth annual President's Community-Based Learning and Service Awards.

"It's extraordinary the way community service and service learning has found a way into the curriculum here," President Warren Baker told the crowd of more than 100 students, faculty and staff gathered in Chumash Auditorium. "We encouraged our faculty and staff to take up volunteerism as an integral part of the learning process, long before it was popular in the rest of the country. It's really a testimony to the vision that exists on campus."

President Baker presents awards to students Kari Fisher and David Haskell

Service learning as part of university courses is an essential part of higher education, Baker said in his opening remarks. Volunteering, he told the students, offers "the opportunity to go beyond your day-to-day activities on campus, and to reach out to help people in society who really are not as fortunate as we are. It also enables us to understand many things on a deeper level, to have empathy, and to understand the problems that exist in our society. It is something that will stay with you for the rest of your life. And we are most proud of you."

Baker told the students the local community benefits when students 'learn by doing' volunteer work as well.

"As I talk with leaders in the community, and heads of service agencies here on the Central Coast, they tell me they know that clearly, many many things in San Luis Obispo and the surrounding areas would not get done without Cal Poly: without the encouragement and aid from our faculty and staff, and the extraordinary enthusiasm of our students.

"Thank you so much for what you are doing for the community and for the example you are setting. What you are doing is extremely important to society," he reminded the crowd.

Vice President for Student Affairs Cornel Morton, in his remarks at the awards ceremony, concurred.

Nationally, it's estimated that volunteers contribute some \$17.5 million worth of labor, Morton said. Here at Cal Poly, said campus AmeriCorps co-director Brady Radovich, the university's AmeriCorps students and [Student Community Service](#) clubs volunteers are now contributing more than an estimated 40,000 volunteer hours annually, representing some \$500,000 in donated labor on the Central Coast.

"Student volunteerism and student civic engagement is a key part of college life. And it's on the rise. And that's one of the best-kept secrets in higher education," Morton said.

After a keynote speech by [Catherine Ryan Hyde](#), a Cambria novelist whose works include "Pay it Forward," President Baker gave awards to seven faculty and staff members, 58 students and 10 student groups.

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