



## Why 50 Hours?

While Iowa ranks near the top in the percentage of residents that volunteer, we are near the middle in the number of hours volunteered per resident (Volunteering in America, 2010). This means that we are not maximizing Iowa's strongest asset, our people and our deep rooted ethic of service to one another.

Currently the average Iowan volunteers 34.2 hours per year. If Iowans increased how much time they give annually to 50 hours, an increase of fewer than 16 hours per resident, volunteers would be providing an additional \$1 billion worth of services to Iowa. Or, if each resident gave less than 20 minutes more per day for a total of just one additional hour a week, we could be providing a total volunteer contribution of nearly \$3 billion in services to Iowa.

In addition to these benefits to the community, research has shown that a contribution of 50 hours tends to be the minimum threshold, or a tipping point, for maximizing impact both to the individual volunteer and the benefactor of his or her service:

- Nearly ¼ of Iowa volunteers who serve each year do not return the next, costing Iowa Nonprofits an estimated \$500 million annually in lost labor. However, **volunteers who serve a more substantial amount of time – 50 hours or more – are 40% more likely to serve one year to the next** than those who serve 1-14 hours a year. (Volunteering in America - Issue Brief on Volunteer Retention, 2007; Leland 2009, Stanford University)
- A study of the *Americans' Changing Lives* survey found a threshold of volunteering was necessary for health benefits. Those individuals who volunteered at least 40 hours per year, as well as those who volunteered with just one organization, or group, had the lowest risk of mortality. (Musick et al., 1999)
- When a child is mentored in a structured relationship for at least at least 50 hours a year:
  - Mentored youth were 46 percent less likely than controls to initiate drug use during the study period (70% for minority youth).
  - Mentored youth were 27 percent less likely than were controls to initiate alcohol use during the study period (50% for minority youth).
  - Mentored youth skipped half as many days of school as control youth.
  - Mentored youth academic achievement/grades improved. (Mentoring a proven delinquency strategy, Grossman & Garry, 1998)