



## THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM INSPIRES CC PARTICIPANTS

*Marketing - Serbia 2009*

*Hosted by World Affairs Council of Oregon in Portland, Oregon*

The participants of the Serbian Marketing program brought home a new spirit of volunteerism after their three-week training in Oregon. At their in-country debriefing meeting back in Serbia, they expressed how impressed they were with the aspect of volunteerism in the US, and how they hoped to practice this in their home country individually and as part of their companies.

Various volunteer experiences were offered to the participants according to their interests and professions. Regardless of their activity of choice, they all expressed that volunteering was a valuable component of the program. The agribusiness group helped the Oregon Food Bank's Learning Garden plant vegetables and learned how the food bank uses volunteers to provide food to food pantries, shelters and other programs helping low-income individuals in seven counties. The ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) team assisted the technologically-based non-profit organization called Free Geek by checking their computer testing systems and building computers. They learned about the organization's innovative method of providing low and no-cost computers to individuals and community organizations throughout the world in exchange for community service.

Many of the participants commented that the culture and practice of volunteerism does not exist in the same way in Serbia, but could have great potential, especially if their children were taught about the spirit of volunteerism, perhaps through environmental consciousness. A few of the alumni said that they were both excited and prepared to proceed with their action plans. Stanko Nikolajev, plans to engage his furniture company in local community activities starting with a "desk" design competition at a local high school. The winning student will then have his or her design created by Stanko's company. Another alumnus, Sandra Dimitrejevic, plans to use her volunteer experiences and new marketing strategies that she learned in the US to organize a charity event that will raise funds and market her furniture business through artistically painting overstocked chairs from her company.

### LET THE ACTIVITIES BEGIN!



*Mirjana Nikolic plants sweet peas at the Oregon Food Bank's Learning Garden as part of the agribusiness volunteer activity on March 26, 2009*



*Svetlana Kovac and Aleksandra Popara help deconstruct some computer equipment during their volunteer activity at Free Geek on March 27, 2009*