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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteers of America Launches Ad Campaign on Moral Injury to Coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day, Sept. 10

Ads will run nationally after airing in Times Square

(Sacramento, CA, Sept. 10, 2019) – Volunteers of America will unveil a new campaign on moral injury in New York’s Times Square to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day. Launch of the campaign, titled “The War Inside” and produced by Dallas-based agency The Richards Group, will [include video on the NASDAQ and Reuters digital boards](#) for the first 10 minutes of every hour on Sept. 10. Print and online advertising also will run nationally following the launch. Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada is also participating in this national effort by including special social media content on moral injury on all its social media channels.

“We are excited to be part of this national campaign to raise awareness on moral injury,” said Leo McFarland, the President of Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada. “We recognize that there are significant numbers of people suffering and Volunteers of America is here to help.”

Volunteers of America has characterized moral injury as “a war inside.” [The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs defines moral injury](#) as “a psychological harm resulting from either (1) acting, failing to prevent, or witnessing actions that violate an individual’s deepest values and principles, or from (2) betrayal by a trusted authority figure in a high-stakes situation.” While moral injury first emerged in research on military veterans, anyone who works in high-stakes situations or who has endured trauma can experience it.

The effects of moral injury are pervasive throughout society and contribute to homelessness, self-harm including suicide, rage, addiction, compulsive overwork and/or depression. Unlike some causes of distress, moral injury is not a mental illness. It is an existential crisis in identity and meaning because of devastating life circumstances and it can happen at any age. Fortunately, recovery is possible. Volunteers of America has stepped up to assist in the recovery for thousands suffering across the U.S.

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“The first step in recovery of moral injury is recognition and understanding it,” said Rita Nakashima Brock, Ph.D., founding director of the [Shay Moral Injury Center](#) at Volunteers of America. The center is named for Jonathan Shay, a medical doctor and clinical psychiatrist best known for his work with post-traumatic stress disorder who first introduced the concept of moral injury. Brock leads Volunteers of America’s efforts to identify and treat moral injury as part of its service programs. “Some think that moral injury is the same as PTSD,” said Brock. “While they can share some symptoms, they’re very different conditions and treating moral injury the same as PTSD can actually worsen the condition.”

A noted theologian, Brock was the founding director of the Soul Repair Center at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University, where she was also a research professor of theology and culture. She is an author of multiple books on moral injury and is a leading national expert on moral injury in combat veterans.

“By introducing ‘The War Inside’ to the world through video, print and online advertising, Volunteers of America can help the public better understand moral injury,” explained Mike King, president and CEO of Volunteers of America. “Greater understanding of this condition will allow it to be addressed earlier and save lives.”

For more information on Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada go to www.voa-ncnn.org, or to see the national campaign, go to www.voa.org.

About Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada

Founded locally in 1911, the Northern California & Northern Nevada office of Volunteers of America is one of the largest providers of social services in the region. The professional paid staff operates more than 50 programs: homeless services and shelters; substance abuse treatment and recovery services; senior, veteran, and youth services; transitional, permanent, supportive, and low income housing. Volunteers of America provides shelter or housing to nearly 1,800 men, women and children every night in Northern California. Learn more about Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada at www.voa-ncnn.org.

About Volunteers of America

Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit, faith-based organization dedicated to helping those in need live healthy, safe and productive lives. Since 1896, our ministry of service has provided compassionate care to a variety of groups, including veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, at-risk youth, men and women returning from prison, homeless individuals and families, those recovering from addictions and many others. Through hundreds of human service programs, including housing and health care, Volunteers of America helps almost 1.5 million people in over 400 communities. Our work touches the mind, body, heart and ultimately the spirit of those we serve, integrating our deep compassion with highly effective programs and services. For more information about Volunteers of America, visit www.VolunteersofAmerica.org.

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