




ajc.com
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

 **PRINT THIS**

 **Click to Print**

[EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

[ajc.com](#) > [Metro](#) > [Atlanta](#)

Young people's volunteering discussed at conference

Former Sen. Sam Nunn among panel members at community service gathering.

By [CHRISTOPHER QUINN](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 06/03/08

Millennials, that massive bulge of young Americans born starting about 1982, have been portrayed in media as spoiled, distracted, indulged, obsessed with technology and dependent on their parents.

Less often heard are stories about how much good they do.

They volunteer — build playgrounds, tutor, travel to the Gulf Coast to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and raise money for causes — at twice the rates their parents did, said David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

He was in Atlanta for the National Conference on Volunteering and Service from Sunday to Tuesday.

Atlanta's Points of Light Institute, led by Michelle Nunn, daughter of former Sen. Sam Nunn, helped organize the conference, which brought more than 4,000 nonprofit and community leaders to town for classes and inspiration.

Millennials and the technology they grew up with were recurring themes in conversations this week during the conference.

"Some call them the 9-11 generation," Eisner said of millennials Tuesday.

The young people's parents and grandparents also jumped in to help after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina, but their volunteering has tapered off. The millennials have maintained their levels of commitment.

"We are not totally sure why," Eisner said.

Some think because they were in formative psychological stages when they began serving and it stuck.

Eisner introduced Sam Nunn along with former Secretary of Defense William Cohen and other panel members to discuss the drive to solve some of America's social ills and ways to encourage more volunteering.

Nunn talked about the possibility of linking student loans to service and the key role serving in the military plays

in developing young people who have a dedication to serving their country.

"We all know that America has many social ills that threaten our future. National service can address a lot of these problems," he said.

Cohen mentioned that young people in particular have learned to use social-networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace to find ways around institutional opposition and to start their own movements.

Darell Hammond, head of KaBoom, which builds playgrounds using volunteer labor, said after the discussion that millennials are different from their parents in other ways as well. They want results now, and they will not wait around for orders at a helping event. They jump right in and start working, creating their own order as they go.

"They have energy and ambition. And they don't ask for permission; they ask for forgiveness," Hammond said.

"They have this smart mob mentality. They just show up and start doing stuff."

Eisner said the group does not have a lot of money now, but he expects their giving will reflect their current interests in coming years.

"My guess would be they will be very generous givers as well," he said.

Vote for this story!**More on ajc.com**

- [MySpace generation likes to get involved](#)
- [Southern Co. chief, Turner have plenty to debate](#)
- [Icahn recommends Yahoo set a \\$49.5B sale price](#)
- [Intel, AMD hit with subpoena in FTC probe](#)
- [Obama on the issues](#)
- [How Obama won the Democratic nomination](#)
- [Four cylinders top car gift for college graduates](#)
- [Gas sippers at graduation party](#)
- [NYPD guards NY Times building after 2 men climb facade](#)
- [Verizon Wireless buying Alltel to form biggest U.S. carrier](#)

[Expand this list](#)

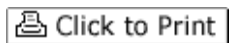
Related Subjects

- [David Eisner](#)
- [Sam Nunn](#)
- [United States](#)
- [Atlanta](#)
- [William Cohen](#)
- [Internet](#)
- [Science and Technology](#)
- [Social Software and Tagging](#)
- [Technology](#)

[Expand this list](#)

Find this article at:

http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2008/06/03/nunn_conference.html



[EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.