

## **The Power of We**

**Delivered by Drew Brees, New Orleans Saints Quarterback, Superbowl MVP 2010**

**Delivered to** Community Council Leaders, Community Activists, Local Non-Profit Agencies, Community Service Organization Leaders, Career Counselors, Volunteer Mentors, and the like. Brees travels around to deliver this message, reiterating messages from President Obama and the CEO of the National Service Agency.

The United We Serve Initiative is intended to give individuals the tools to volunteer based on individual interests and community needs. The website and database at [Serve.Gov](http://Serve.Gov) is maintained by the National Service Agency, with service stories and blog entries only streaming in from White House Administration entries. Highlighted success stories are those from volunteers that are part of the Vista or Americorps program, save for just a couple (difficult to find) vignettes, thus unintentionally perpetuating the notion volunteer service has to be a huge commitment.

The goal of this speech is to inspire community leaders and non-profit organizations to trickle down individual opportunities for national service with the United We Serve initiative. It is intended to motivate people to service, to visit the website at [Serve.gov](http://Serve.gov), and to use the interactive tools available for service projects.

Thank you. I am honored to be here with you today. If you are in this room, it is because you have proven your commitment to bettering our nation. Not just by rooting for the New Orleans Saints in the Super Bowl, or by winning a radio contest to meet Drew Brees,

**PAUSE FOR LAUGHTER**

... But because you know what it means to get something by giving back. Tonight, I am going to talk with you about the reality of community service and how it is going to change our world. This starts in places like New Orleans. It moves into the Gulf. It crosses the Mississippi and into the West, this thing, this community, this idea of giving back. It starts with you, right here.

## PAUSE

Many look at me and think I'm going to talk to you tonight about the sort of community service that asks people to drop everything and help those folks you see front-and-center on the news. People in places where it seems no help can be enough. Like after Katrina.

But really I am going to talk with you tonight about a new way to serve. A way for volunteers to give back to communities based on their talents, their drive, and their timetable. Based on the needs of their communities, right out the front door.

Tonight, I am going to ask YOU to empower others. I'm **also going to ask you to keep serving**, don't get me wrong...

PAUSE

But I am also going to say that with United We Serve, we can put power in the hands of people all across the nation to be agents of change.

PAUSE

Better yet, YOU can deliver tools to individuals, projects to communities, inspiration to the public to do more good for the nation.

We are at an intense time. It's like I'm in the playoffs all over again.

CHUCKLE

Where I knew I had the tools, the ability, the outlet, and I knew I had to just had to go and do it.

Let me tell you about a lady who DID do it. Karen Snead, from Colbert County, Alabama. Karen saw children affected by drug abuse. She saw that these kids had a dire need for their voice to be heard. So she up and created a non-profit organization of Court Appointed Special Advocates; they call them CASA's. Karen started the CASA program by personally devoting more than thirty-three *hundred* volunteer hours to training and development. Twenty-four foster children are now receiving mentoring and representation in the Colbert County Court system. Karen not only helped those kids, she also saved the county nearly seven-hundred thousand dollars in annual in taxpayer dollars.

Now, Karen's is a remarkable story. She created the Super Bowl of Volunteering.

PAUSE FOR LAUGHTER

I am asking you today. What is YOUR story about?

LOOK AROUND AT AUDIENCE

I want it to be about every single person in our nation being able to give back, regardless of background or age or race. I want it to be about YOU giving people the tools to make that happen.

PAUSE

I look around in New Orleans and I see need. My beautiful wife, Brittany, started the Brees Dream Foundation. She did it because she looked around and saw that we could do something.

We could lend the one thing people wanted – US! – to helping others. You do that, too!

### EXCITED PAUSE

And, you can deliver that power to other Americans!

Others who can then deliver themselves to their communities!

PAUSE, audible deep breath

I know you don't just do this work because it makes you feel good. All of us, in this room, we do it because – play by play -- we want to make an impact. An impact we can all see. And I know you can't do it alone.

If you could do it all yourself, well, really then, you wouldn't see kids dropping out of school, or such devastating environmental disaster, or so much poverty and unemployment.

You are good at what you do. You go out and choose to tackle the problems you see.

The reality is...

PAUSE

...Well, these issues we face everyday are too big to be left to one leader, one organization or even one government. But more than that, they are too big and too important to be left to the chance of good intentions. These problems will be solved only with a team effort. No one can be a star quarterback here, not even me. Not even Karen from Alabama.

In order to build our team, we have to recruit the players. We have to say, "You are good at this, and we need you." We have to say, "We want you to be a part because you can manage

this.” We have to create the service projects and point people in the right direction.

Heck, what else am I going to do once I stop playing professional football?

CHUCKLE

I’ve got to be able to volunteer somewhere! And then put it on the Internet so everyone knows I’m still around and doing something, right?

PAUSE WITH SMILE AND LAUGHTER

This is the power of service that spans neighborhoods -- and race -- and gender -- and location -- and age -- and fantasy draft picks...

## PAUSE FOR LAUGHTER

Seriously, nothing can overcome this awesome power. Let me tell you,

Gwen Moore was an expectant mother on welfare and now she is the Congresswoman from Wisconsin's Fourth District. She found her calling as a VISTA member. Her leadership in creating a community credit union earned her the VISTA Volunteer of the Decade award.

Congresswoman Moore's story happens all across this great country. I know you have these stories in your office, outside your front door, or in your backyard. I know they are part of YOUR story.

Now we are asking YOU to dig deep and think about the reality of what service looks like when you do open that door a little wider.

What does it look like? During a recession? During an energy crisis? During layoffs and education funding cuts? How are we going to find the courage to ask more of people?

PAUSE

Because we can ask more of ourselves. We can work to give people a way to get back as they give. We can show them they get to experience our nation coming together. They get to do it. Right now. Right here.

They get to be on our winning team!

Now is the time for us to set a game plan and do it. Create service projects. Get individuals involved. Empower everyone to share, to feel, to know they are giving the one thing people need – themselves. Just like how you give YOURself. Just like my wife who gives herself.

The CEO of the Corporation for National Service said, “We have a President who gets it. We have a First Lady who gets it. We have bipartisan support in Congress. More Americans are stepping up to serve. And we have a mandate to place service at the center of our response to big national problems.”

And now this is YOUR moment, YOUR chance to create opportunities for people to serve and for communities to get

what they need... Whether you are a star Quarterback or Karen Snead from Alabama. Whether you are a foster parent taking care of a child or a VISTA member responding to disasters in the Gulf. Whether you are at a big national organization or a small community group. Whether you are plucking weeds for two hours or cleaning up after a flood for two weeks. Whether you are in the public, private, or non-profit sector. Whether you think you can or know you can...

**BRIEF PAUSE**

**YOU can.**

**PAUSE**

It is up to YOU. It is up to US. The President has said – we are the ones we've been waiting for.

So it is up to us to make the play. The winning pass has been thrown. It's time to take home the ring.

HOLD UP SUPERBOWL RING, SMILE

Thank you.

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