



MARIA LEE

FIRST LADY STATE OF TENNESSEE

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First Lady Maria Lee Launches Tennessee Serves

Mrs. Lee to focus on serving Tennesseans and their communities

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Today, First Lady Maria Lee launched Tennessee Serves, a three-part initiative designed to engage Tennesseans in serving one another and their communities.

“To me, this is not just an initiative, but who I am as a person,” **said Mrs. Lee.** “My heart is devoted to serving others and the impact we hope to have.”

“When Maria and I made the decision to run, it was born out of a desire to serve,” **said Gov. Bill Lee.** “Maria’s heart for service has been a strength of her life. Tennessee Serves is a way to encourage all Tennesseans to love our neighbors as ourselves and demonstrate that love through acts of service.”

Serve – Through this initiative, Lee and her team will get to work on meeting the needs of Tennesseans across the state with a special focus on its distressed counties. By partnering with local nonprofits and county mayors, the first lady will personally participate in service projects tailored to the needs of each community.

“You cannot help someone until you know what they need,” **said Mrs. Lee.** “That’s why when it came time for us to decide how to build this initiative and who to help, I didn’t want to limit the scope of service. Instead, I wanted my office to focus on meeting the needs of all Tennesseans. Whether it’s delivering a hot meal or joining in on a home build for a veteran, we are here to serve.”

Highlight – As part of Tennessee Serves, the Office of the First Lady will highlight the countless people and organizations already making a difference in their communities. Service Spotlights will be used to showcase efforts across the state on the first lady’s website and social media. Service Spotlight suggestions and nominees can be submitted by emailing Tennessee.Serves@tn.gov or by posting to social media using #TennesseeServes.

“There are so many incredible organizations and people already serving their communities in ways that go unrecognized every day,” **said Mrs. Lee.** “We want to highlight them so that others will see their great work and be motivated to get involved.”

Mobilize – Lastly, through this initiative, the Office of the First Lady wants to mobilize Tennesseans to meet the needs of their communities. This mobilization effort starts with the Tennessee Kids Serve Summer Challenge. Rising kindergartners through sixth grade will be asked to devote a portion of

their summer break to service. Participants with the most service hours logged will be invited to join Governor and First Lady Lee at the Tennessee Residence for a celebration.

“At a young age, my parents taught me the importance of serving others, and now, it’s a big part of who I am. I hope to instill the same in kids at an early age,” **said Mrs. Lee.** “By engaging kids, we hope that the whole family will get involved in serving.”

“Ultimately, our goal is to serve our state by serving your community by serving one person at a time,” **said Mrs. Lee.** “Lives and communities are changed when neighbors help neighbors, and I am grateful for the opportunity as first lady to help my neighbors across our great state.”

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