For Immediate Release

National AIDS Memorial Honors Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi for Three Decades of Courageous Leadership in the Fight Against HIV and AIDS

- Hundreds of volunteers gather to honor the work and leadership of Congresswoman Pelosi in her fight to support funding, research and quality of life legislation for those impacted by HIV/AIDS
- Event coincides with National AIDS Memorial surpassing 200,000 hours of community volunteer work to maintain the living memorial

SAN FRANCISCO (June 17, 2017) -- San Francisco’s Congresswoman, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, joined hundreds of volunteers at the National AIDS Memorial for a community volunteer workday to commemorate her 30 years in Congress. Since her first days in Washington D.C., she has been a leader, champion and hero on the issue of HIV/AIDS and her avid support of the LGBT community.

During the morning activities, Congresswoman Pelosi joined volunteers as they planted flowers, new shrubs and a tree, in addition to helping maintain the grounds of the Nation’s AIDS Memorial. The event also marked a significant milestone for the National AIDS Memorial as it has surpassed 200,000 hours given by community volunteers to create and maintain the 10-acre living memorial.

For the past thirty years, Congresswoman Pelosi has worked courageously to advance the issue of HIV/AIDS, supporting major funding, research and programs that have been critically important to the advancements and improvement of the quality of life for those living with the disease. In 1996 she successfully spearheaded the passage of legislation that was signed by President Bill Clinton designating San Francisco’s AIDS Memorial Grove, as a National Memorial.

“For thirty years our community was ravaged by AIDS and with the leadership of Congresswoman Pelosi we came together here in this grove to heal and remember our lost friends and loved ones,” said John Cunningham, Executive Director, National AIDS Memorial. “Her courage to stand-up and fight for our community paved the way for this memorial. Without her leadership this memorial would not be possible. We are forever grateful for her tireless spirit, love and willingness to fight for our cause.”

Congresswoman Pelosi’s leadership on the issue of HIV/AIDS includes the accelerated development of an HIV vaccine, expansion of access to Medicaid for people living with HIV, and increase funding for the Ryan White CARE Act, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), the Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative and other research, care, treatment and prevention initiatives vital to people living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS. Through her support of domestic and international programs, she has helped significantly increase spending for HIV/AIDS initiatives have saved the lives of millions and provided testing, counseling and better care to some of the most vulnerable men, women, and children around the world.
“This memorial has evolved into a national treasure for our entire country to remember, seek comfort and ensure that we never forget the story of AIDS and the lives it has taken. Nancy’s support of this memorial and for those individuals impacted by HIV/AIDS has been constant and unshakable,” said Mike Shriver, National AIDS Memorial Board Chair. “Her courage, particularly at times when people living and dying of AIDS needed a strong voice, will never be forgotten. Today we honor her 30 years of service, friendship and most importantly, her passion for our cause.”

Congresswoman Pelosi has faithfully commemorated her milestone years in Congress by volunteering at the Grove. On her 10th, 20th, and 25th anniversary years in Congress, she has planted commemorative trees. She has volunteered on many other occasions over the years, often bringing her family and grandchildren to be a regular part of the Grove’s Community Volunteer Workdays. During today’s Community Volunteer Workday, volunteers welcomed the Congresswoman back to the Memorial, joining her to plant a ceremonial magnolia tree and various landscaping activities, including laying mulch and planting flowers.

"The National AIDS Memorial is not just a place for where we come and remember those we’ve lost, it is a place where people from around the country, around the world, can come together to remember their lives, to hope and continue working tirelessly until we find a cure,” said Congresswoman Pelosi. “This sacred ground honors all who have been touched by HIV/AIDS but more importantly, it forever keeps their spirit, their love and their stories with us and so future generations never forget. This grove inspires us to keep fighting in their memory and for what’s right.”

The National AIDS Memorial’s 10-acre site in Golden Gate Park relies on its Community Volunteer Workday program to help maintain the site and to continue educating groups about the impact of HIV/AIDS on our community. Since the first Workday in 1991, nearly 40,000 volunteers have participated in more than 300 Community Volunteer Workdays, donating more than 200,000 volunteer hours and planting more than 10,000 trees, plants and shrubs. Community Volunteer Workdays take place every third Saturday of every month from March through October, and on other days throughout the year at the request of corporate and community groups.

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About the National AIDS Memorial: The National AIDS Memorial is a dedicated space in the national landscape where millions of Americans touched directly or indirectly by AIDS can gather to heal, hope, and remember. The National AIDS Memorial, known as “the Grove”, was created twenty-five years ago in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a place where those impacted by AIDS could both grieve and begin the process of healing. In 1996, legislation sponsored by U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi was signed into law by President Clinton that elevated “the Grove” as this nation’s sole federally-designated National AIDS Memorial. Today, nearly 40,000 individuals from around the world have contributed 200,000 volunteer hours to support the National AIDS Memorial and its mission to provide, in perpetuity, a place of remembrance so that the lives of people who died from AIDS are not forgotten and the story is known by future generations. For more information visit www.aidsmemorial.org, follow on Facebook @NationalAIDSMemorial or @AIDS_Memorial on Twitter.

Media Contact: Kevin Herglotz
415-874-9650
kevin@hpastrategies.com