

### **Partner Spotlight – President and CEO of Leadership Florida, Wendy Spencer**

*FLASH Leadership Partner Wendy Spencer serves as the President and CEO of Leadership Florida assuming her duties on March 1, 2017. Leadership Florida is celebrating its 35th year of convening Florida's top leaders in to enhance and recharge their leadership skills, and to educate and inspire them to work towards a better Florida. She just completed a five-year term as the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), or as often referred to as the "Nation's Top CEO of Service".*

**Q: What is your background or education and how did you get interested in disaster safety?**

**A:** My educational background is in the communications field which is one of the most important factors in a successful, well-prepared community in times of disasters. I had the role as CEO of the Florida Governor's Commission on Volunteerism (commonly known as Volunteer Florida) which is tasked with an official function in Florida's Emergency Management System. The function is Emergency Support Function 15 for Volunteer and Donations Management. Volunteer Florida's greatest challenge came over a two-year period between 2004 and 2005 when numerous storms impacted every county in Florida with multiple hurricanes. Over this two-year period, more than 250,000 volunteers responded from all over the nation to help Floridians recovery from these storms. \$85 million in donated goods, services and funding poured into the state to aid Floridians impacted who had limited resources to recovery quickly.

**Q: Can you tell us about specific projects or programs you are working on or are passionate about in the resilience field?**

**A:** To be a resilient community is to be prepared. It is critical that as many citizens as possible are well prepared for perils of all types. And preparedness includes strengthening our homes, businesses and infrastructure to withstand the toughest of storms, having an evacuation or a shelter-in-place plan for your families, and most importantly, find ways to help those who cannot help themselves like our frail and elderly residents or neighbors with limited resources to prepare adequately. There are many resources and lessons learned from our nation's disasters and experiences in the past that are available to anyone interested in a more resilient community. Start with [www.flash.org](http://www.flash.org).

**Q: What resources are available to communities that you believe are underutilized or overlooked?**

**A:** There are 350,000 National Service participants serving across the U.S. each year, many of which are trained in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery work, and others who are available to assist when disasters hit a community. These are AmeriCorps, VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, and Senior Corps programs. Some of these members can travel from other states to respond to disasters and others can be deployed locally to assist. Find out more on how your community or organization can tap into these resources at [www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/disaster-services](http://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/disaster-services)

To learn more about this dynamic leader and longtime FLASH supporter [click here](#).