



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 23, 2017

## TOURISM INDUSTRY GIVES BACK IN OAKLAND, MARCH 23-24

### ***Industry Professionals Nationwide Gather to Volunteer in Only West Coast Destination; Part of Tourism Cares Initiative to Support City Tourism***

Oakland, CA – **Visit Oakland**, the city's official destination marketing organization, is excited to partner with **Tourism Cares**, the philanthropic community of the tourism industry, to welcome 175 volunteers to the City of Oakland on March 23 & 24. **Visit California** is a sponsor of the program in Oakland.

Tourism in Oakland is a proven economic driver for the city. In 2015, visitor spend was \$1.5B with Oakland welcoming a record 3.6M visitors. Over 2.6M stayed overnight in an Oakland hotel. Tourism directly supports 7,000 full-time jobs in Oakland and 94,000 full-time jobs in the Oakland East Bay region.

Oakland was chosen as part of the 2017 *Tourism Cares for our Cities* series and the only West Coast city in this year's sites. Tourism Care's focus on city tourism aligns with the UN World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) recognition that city tourism as a critical force to sustainable development.

"We're enthusiastic about the support from our peers in the tourism industry," says **Mark Everton, President & CEO of Visit Oakland**. "More visitors are looking to Oakland now more than ever. We're proud to work together in the community and show off our unique, vibrant destination!"

"Visit California is honored to sponsor Tourism Cares in Oakland and help highlight the importance of tourism and social responsibility," said **Caroline Beteta, President & CEO of Visit California**. "We are excited to give back to the community to help ensure that all of the treasures California has to offer are enjoyed by residents and tourists alike."

Volunteers will be able to take part in three work sites in Oakland:

1. **Children's Fairyland** – An iconic attraction for the city, this storybook theme park has been open for 60 years and was an inspiration for Walt Disney's Disneyland. Volunteers will enhance animal exhibits, build storage sheds & greenhouse, and help with general cleaning and painting.
2. **Gardens at Lake Merritt** – An urban oasis in the middle of Oakland, the small city staff at the gardens relies on volunteer service to help with large scale painting and landscape projects. Volunteers will be pruning & planting a rose garden and creating "seed balls" to help Oakland kids learn about bees and pollination.
3. **City Mural** – Oakland's vibrant arts scene can be experienced first-hand through the hundreds of street murals throughout the city. In collaboration with local muralists Dragon School, volunteers will be able to participate in a "paint by numbers" project at Independent Brewing



Company in the Jack London neighborhood, just one of the many craft brewers on the new Oakland Ale Trail.

Follow Visit Oakland and the Tourism Cares program on social media: [@visitoakland](#), [@tourismcares](#) and [#oaklandloveit](#).

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#### **ABOUT VISIT OAKLAND**

Visit Oakland is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) organization, with a 21-member board of directors and full time staff whose goal is to increase tourism's economic impact to Oakland through destination development and brand management. For more information, visit [www.visit oakland.com](#) and follow [@visitoakland](#) on social media.

#### **ABOUT VISIT CALIFORNIA**

Visit California is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state's travel industry – that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. According to Visit California, spending by travelers totaled \$125.9 billion in 2016 in California, generating 1,090,000 jobs in the state and \$10.3 billion in state and local tax revenues. For more information about Visit California, go to [www.travelmattersca.com](#). For story ideas, media information, downloadable images, video and more, go to [www.media.visitcalifornia.com](#).

#### **ABOUT TOURISM CARES**

Tourism Cares, Inc., a US 501(c)(3) public charity, maximizes travel's potential to be a global force for good by leveraging the care that travelers and the industry feel for the places we love. We unite the travel industry to make a greater impact on shared priorities, and to help each company fulfill its giving goals. Together, with leading travel and tourism companies and associations, we make a greater difference on three shared issues: helping destinations in need, supporting our workforce, and improving our corporate social responsibility. Learn more at [www.TourismCares.org](#) and [@TourismCares](#).

#### **CONTACT**

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