

**Corporation for National and Community Service  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
May 21, 2002**

The Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service convened at 9:45 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in Boston, MA. The following members of the Corporation's Board were present:

Stephen Goldsmith, Chair  
Dorothy Johnson  
Amy Achor  
Alan Solomont  
Juanita Doty  
Thomas Ehrlich  
Christopher Gallagher  
Mark Gearan  
Mark Racicot (joined by telephone at 9:55 a.m.)

Carol Kinsley participated at the invitation of the Board of Directors.

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting that had been held on February 5, 2002, subject to correcting the summary of a report given on service-learning.

## **SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSIONS**

### **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Mr. Goldsmith opened the meeting recognizing the Chief Executive Officer's good work on reauthorization, installing a new management team at the Corporation, and focusing on the principles of continuous improvement. He noted that the Board in its previous meetings had emphasized certain principles: decentralization; more accountability; efforts to make it easier for grassroots, small- and faith-based organizations to do business with the Corporation; and building the civic infrastructure and capacity of nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Goldsmith also discussed the Corporation's challenge of emphasizing accountability without stifling initiative. He also discussed the issue of the Corporation setting performance measures and defining results, which is often problematic. He concluded his remarks by mentioning that one possible method of addressing the performance issue is to use a "nominating up" approach by the state commissions and grantees.

### **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Mr. Lenkowsky praised the work of the Corporation's staff for its work on reauthorization. The President issued his principles for reauthorization on April 9, 2002, and the Corporation has worked hard, along with Congress and the White House, to turn those principles into legislation. Mr. Lenkowsky stated that he hoped that a bill would be introduced very soon, with bi-partisan support.

Mr. Lenkowsky also mentioned that the White House was working on nominees for the Board, and that Russell George was the nominee to be the Corporation's new Inspector General. Mr. Lenkowsky thanked Terry Bathen for his fine performance as Acting Inspector General over the past several months. He mentioned that AmeriCorps would be hiring new staff at the "Director" level, that Homeland Security grants would soon be announced, and that the Senior Corps and Points of Light national service conferences would be held in Salt Lake City in June. He stated that the most recent audit was an unqualified opinion for the second consecutive year with no material weaknesses, which is a tremendous improvement over past years. Mr. Lenkowsky discussed the work that David Reingold was conducting in the Corporation's restructured research department, and noted that the Corporation was expecting to host approximately 25 new summer interns. He praised the hard work of the Directors of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve, and further stated that Amy Cohen, the Director of the Department of Service-Learning, has been working with USA Freedom Corps to emphasize the importance of service-learning in our schools and universities throughout the United States. He concluded his remarks by thanking Michele Tennery for her work in coordinating the board meeting and for handling all the arrangements.

## **Management, Audit, and Governance Committee Report**

Chris Gallagher told the board that the Management, Audit, and Governance Committee met the previous day to discuss various audit issues. Joining the members at the meeting were Mr. Goldsmith and the new IG designee, Russell George. Mr. Gallagher stated that he thinks Mr. George will be an important addition to the Corporation, which should result in improved levels of cooperation between the Office of the Inspector General and Corporation management.

He also joined Mr. Lenkowsky in praising the Corporation's progress as reflected in the clean opinion obtained from outside auditors for the second consecutive year. He described the Corporation's new E-Grants system. He commented on the outstanding job performed by Terry Bathen, the Acting IG, including some very significant and improved steps concerning audits of state commissions.

He concluded his remarks by stating that the Corporation was completing the resolution of several audits, and recommended more emphasis on accountability and performance issues by our grantees. The challenge is to create performance measures that are helpful, but not too intrusive. The Committee looks forward to helping the Corporation with its relationships with the various states and programs in order to maximize overall performance.

## **Planning, Evaluation, and Research Committee Report**

Tom Ehrlich indicated that the committee met the previous day and focused on four large clusters of issues. The first concerns translating and communicating the President's principles, specifically, those concerning accountability, sustainability, and capacity building, in such a manner that we ensure that the field understands them, and is able to implement them in a productive and comprehensive manner.

The committee also looked at the relationship with the Points of Light Foundation concerning the National Service Leadership Institute. Mr. Ehrlich expressed his concern with the lack of progress in meeting the milestones that were set, but deferred further action until the September board meeting.

A third issue concerns research and evaluation projects that are currently being conducted. The committee has discussed these issues with David Reingold, Director of Research and Policy Development, as to how to minimize certain problems that have surfaced. One of these concerns is the infusion of citizenship education into our AmeriCorps programs. This has taken longer than originally expected.

Mr. Reingold has developed an evaluation research matrix that focuses on individuals, organizations, and communities, along with outputs, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes – with the intent to put more emphasis on the long-term approach in order demonstrate how well we are actually succeeding.

Finally, the committee looked at the issue of bringing together training and technical assistance. It is the committee's desire that these two components be brought together without losing the special dimensions of Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, and AmeriCorps.

### **Communications Committee Report**

Juanita Doty commented that she was pleased with the bipartisan spirit that exists among the Corporation, the White House, and Congress, especially as it relates to reauthorization. She also mentioned that the faith-based and community-based initiatives were continuing to move forward, with the overall objective of increasing the number of faith-based and small community-based organizations participating in national service. She stated that 12 states have been selected as model states in this area. These states will develop opportunities and strategies for increased involvement by small and community-based organizations.

The state of Mississippi held the first state-wide summit addressing faith-based and small community-based issues. It was well attended with representatives from the 12 model states, the Corporation, and the White House.

Mr. Lenkowsky and Mark Scott also met with the new president of the National Conference of Black Mayors. Sixty percent of black mayors come from towns of 10,000 or less. Therefore, this organization is an excellent vehicle to help reach small community-based organizations.

The Corporation will soon launch its new public service campaign – “Americans give back”! This will feature AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members answering the President's Call to Service. The campaign will occur on both radio and television – in English and in Spanish.

Ms. Doty stated that the committee will be holding monthly conference calls in order to obtain updates on the strategies developed by, and with, the 12 model states. She concluded her remarks by thanking Christine Benero, Director of Public Affairs, and her staff for their fine work.

## Reports to the Board

*Professor Robert Putnam*

Professor Putnam discussed issues facing America today in terms of community building through social capital. He explained that the core idea of social capital is that social networks have value, just as education has value. He stated that we have learned that where there is a dense network of social connections, crime is deterred. This results in broad, positive benefits for the community. In communities that have high levels of social capital, fewer government officials are corrupt, people pay their taxes, and economic activity is encouraged. This also results in more people volunteering and contributing to charitable causes. Therefore, by simply increasing the amount of social connectedness, there are more positive effects on that community.

Professor Putnam stated that he believes that one of the reasons that there are more clinically depressed Americans today is because of the growth of social isolation. People don't know their neighbors. He notes that there has been a decline in membership of civic organizations throughout America. He also points out that participation in bowling leagues is down, which is an indicator of a trend toward isolation. As an analogy, he describes earlier periods in our nation's history when we also seemed to be moving away from these social connections. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, industrialization caused the decline of many community-building activities. However, soon people started to recognize that they were less connected than their parents. Consequently, such organizations as the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, and other similar organizations were created. As time moves forward, it is important that we, as a country, need a sustained period of civic innovation. Often, solutions come from ordinary people throughout America. Professor Putnam emphasized that the re-invention of civic institutions needs to be accomplished every two or three generations. In this regard, he thinks that the Corporation for National and Community Service has a special responsibility – not to merely build social capital, but to also help Americans to reinvent concepts of social capital and to think creatively.

He said that the 9/11 attack on America changed the way that people felt about their communities. There has been an increase in giving and volunteering, as well as an increase in the trust of others and the government. He says that generally, there is always a spike in community concern after every tragedy. These spikes normally occur for only finite periods of time. The only exceptions to these short-lived spikes were Pearl Harbor and World War II. Therefore, the question today is whether the spike in community mindedness that we have experienced since 9/11 will be like that experienced after Pearl Harbor, or will it be more like that experienced after the Buffalo snowstorm, which disappeared after a few weeks.

He stated that our nation is in the middle of a fleeting opportunity and we need to take full advantage of this opportunity. It is a race against time and the window of opportunity is closing rapidly. He urged the Corporation and the members of the board

to take advantage of this opportunity. He noted that the President has called for Americans to increase their volunteer activities and that the administration is supporting a new civic education. Professor Putnam praised Mr. Lenkowsky's public statement that he heads the federal agency that is involved with social capital. He concluded his remarks by stating that it is important that the Corporation's programs succeed and that they be as innovative as possible.

*Massachusetts Service Alliance*

Mr. Mark Gearan, a member of the Corporation's board, then introduced Ms. Maureen Curley to host the discussion concerning the Massachusetts Service Alliance. Ms. Curley discussed the Alliance and how it was created. It uses federal, state, and private funds to operate 27 AmeriCorps programs. It also operates older adult programs. In addition to these programs, the Alliance is involved in after-school service-learning programs. One of these is the Massachusetts Campus Compact and the other is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The alliance also has mentoring programs that are funded by the State. In addition to generally promoting service within the state, the Alliance also views itself as a convener that brings players together to provide various services to the community. It is involved in many networking opportunities, which helps connect people with service opportunities within their respective communities.

*Ms. Molly Baldwin*

Ms. Baldwin is the Executive Director of ROCA, Inc. ROCA is a human development and community building organization that has been operating for fourteen years. It is a very diverse, multi-cultural, evolving, grass-roots organization. The basic premise held by the organization is that people in the community can lead and make their lives better by learning how to live together. They have two primary values: (1) that everyone needs to feel connected; and (2) that every person should understand that he/she has a purpose in life that is greater than his or her own. ROCA fosters relationships with all types of community activities, including faith-based organizations in the community. People at ROCA are now under the fourth generation of leadership and they are totally immersed in the activities in which the program is involved. Finally, they are making a difference by bringing peace and safety to the community.

*Dr. Shelley Berman*

Dr. Berman is the Superintendent of the Hudson School Systems and is a national leader in service-learning. He presented a report to the board that described how 100 % of the students in the Hudson School System are involved in service learning. He stated that they have attempted to build a sense of community and to build a network among the staff and the students. In addition to service-learning enhancing academics, it also promotes ethics, moral development, and personal growth. Dr. Berman stated that he has

a strong interest in civic engagement and its renewal. Therefore, he sees his efforts in the Hudson School System as an attempt to rebuild democracy and citizenship. He noted that by volunteering early in life, children learn of its overall effect and importance. He expressed his support of the Learn and Serve program and its importance to service learning within the United States. It is the “feeder” system for AmeriCorps and for other volunteer opportunities later in life. He described specific service learning activities within the Hudson School System and how they have enhanced the students’ overall performance – from kindergarten through high school. The students are involved with senior adults, food pantries, environmental projects, mentoring, and social issues. The program has built a bridge between the schools and the community. He concluded by thanking the board for the Corporation’s role in service learning, while encouraging more funding for Learn and Serve.

*Ms. Jackie Rivers*

Ms. Rivers is the Executive Director of the National Ten Point Leadership Foundation. She told the board that when she and her husband moved to their small church in a high crime area in Boston, they really didn’t realize the significance of their actions. As they walked around the neighborhood, it became evident that they were in an area where crime and drugs were abundant. They met Selvin Brown, the drug lord of the neighborhood, who would eventually adopt Gene, Jackie’s husband, as his “father” (Selvin would eventually die of a drug overdose). The concept of social isolation is a powerful experience because kids are often not only cut off from their neighbors, but also from their parents as well. Therefore, it is important that people step up and take responsibility for helping these children to overcome these barriers. According to Ms. Rivers, Selvin would take Gene into the crack houses and show him first-hand what was happening to the kids. With Selvin’s assistance, Gene was able to craft the ten point plan. Gene was known to say that if the churches and faith-based organizations didn’t go into the streets to work with the kids, the streets were going to come to the churches. This statement proved to be prophetic when gang members entered a church during a funeral and stabbed a rival gang member inside the church. This caused a public outrage in Boston and a wake-up call to the ministers and faith-based organizations. It also led to collaboration among 40 churches, with the ten point plan becoming the center of the coalition. Law enforcement agencies became involved, with their emphasis on intervention, prevention, and enforcement. This all resulted in a drop in the crime rate between 1990 and 1996.

Ms. Rivers also pointed out that her foundation also works closely with the Jewish community, which has been very supportive. The philosophy of the foundation is that traditionally, black churches have been a source of social activism and a voice for justice. The black churches created a world in which many blacks lived – especially when they were not permitted to take part in other segments of society. The black churches presented the opportunity to have an alternative source of affirmation of their members’ ability to run their own organizations and societies. Today, it is important that the churches and faith-based organizations take the lead in service. Therefore, the goal of

the foundation is to help provide a link between the churches and the local communities. One such example is the “Sharks and Minnows” policy. This is where ministers work with the police to identify the kids who cause the most trouble in the community and to offer these kids alternatives to going to jail. There are three central points to the ten point plan: (1) to establish drop-in centers that provide a sanctuary for troubled kids; (2) individuals serving as court advocates; and (3) individuals establishing one-on-one relationships with high-risk groups in the criminal or juvenile justice system. Therefore, the foundation focuses on providing technical assistance that facilitates the development of good relationships between churches, faith-based organizations, and law enforcement agencies. She concluded by stating that she sees a great potential for connecting with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

### **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Mr. Goldsmith congratulated Amy Achor on her graduation from Harvard. He thanked Alan Solomont for his hospitality and for arranging for Senator Daschle to stop by the previous evening’s reception to express his support for the Corporation and its activities.

Mr. Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.