

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**May 24, 2006**

The Board of Directors convened in Washington, D.C. The following members of the Corporation's Board were present:

Stephen Goldsmith, Chair  
Dorothy Johnson, Vice Chair  
Vincent Juaristi  
Carol Kinsley  
Jacob Lew  
Mimi Mager  
William Schambra  
Leona White Hat

Mark Gearan participated at the invitation of the Board of Directors.

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on February 8, 2006. (Transcript, 7).

The Board approved a resolution recognizing the AmeriCorps VISTA program's more than 40 years of service. (Transcript, 46-48)

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

Chairman Stephen Goldsmith welcomed Vincent Juaristi as the newest member of the Board of Directors. Mr. Goldsmith commented that there has been an upsurge in interest in the Corporation and demand for the services it provides, particularly among young people. He noted that despite the increased interest in the Corporation's services and opportunities the Corporation's financial resources had not experienced a similar increase. He praised CEO David Eisner and Corporation staff for finding ways to be efficient in producing more resources and for increasing their level of performance. In a challenging budget environment, each of the Corporation's programs has done good work even if not equally funded.

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

CEO David Eisner articulated a shared sentiment of excitement and pride surrounding the celebration of VISTA's more than 40 years of service, including a reception and a salute to occur during the meeting.

Mr. Eisner agreed with the chairman that there had been a strong trend of increased interest in the Corporation. President Bush recently issued an Executive Order directing federal agencies to expand their commitment to service and volunteering, an effort the Corporation is supporting and helping to implement with USA Freedom Corps. The Corporation recently celebrated the launch of the Federal Mentoring Council, co-chaired by Mr. Eisner and Harry Wilson from the Department of Health and Human Services. Together, they plan to better align available federal resources allocated for mentoring activities and encourage cooperation among different programs.

Mr. Eisner reported an increased focus on the Corporation's Strategic Plan, passed in the Board's February 2006 meeting, with plans underway to focus on its key initiatives at the 2006 National Conference in Seattle in June. The focus areas of increasing the number of volunteers to 75 million Americans by 2010, providing mentors to under-served youth, encouraging youth to engage in serve, and engaging Baby Boomers, have all shown progress. To achieve the goal of increasing the number of mentors by 3 million by 2010, the Corporation has partnered with dozens of other organizations. The Corporation has also worked partnered with organizations, including corporate, private, and non-profit, to encourage Boomers to volunteer. The opportunities to engage students in volunteering has continued to blossom, evidenced particularly by the numerous students who spent their spring breaks in the Gulf Coast region assisting in hurricane relief. This robust volunteering effort was made possible by the presence of NCCC, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps members in the Gulf region organizing and supporting the volunteering efforts. The Corporation anticipates with great pride an ensuing "summer of service," in which more than 21,000 participants in national service will serve in the Gulf in the coming summer months to help rebuild lives and communities. This service will be bolstered by tens of thousands of community volunteers.

Mr. Eisner related that the Corporation will continue to focus on volunteer efforts to

improve the situation in the hurricane-ravaged areas of the Gulf Coast. The Corporation is in the middle of its legislative appropriation cycle. In the interim, the Corporation is expecting a supplemental \$20 million for AmeriCorps\*NCCC to serve in Katrina recovery efforts.

Mr. Eisner reported that the Corporation was near the end of its annual grant competition. The Corporation was pleased with the quality of applicants and looks forward to sharing the results.

Mr. Eisner stated that the Corporation is advancing several change initiatives in an effort to be more efficient, improve its quality of service and responsiveness to customers, and ensure greater sustainability and ability to meet the Corporation's mission. Several of these initiatives focus on reducing grantee burden. The Corporation is also working to automate Trust management so that AmeriCorps members and alumni will be able to transfer their education awards from the Trust to their respective education or financial loan institutions expeditiously and with relative ease. The Corporation has also taken initial steps to consolidate its regional service centers. The Corporation has selected Philadelphia as the location for a consolidated service center and is pleased to announce that the consolidation will occur without a reduction in force.

Carol Kinsley thanked Rachel Zwerin and David Premo for arranging site visits for Board members. She found the visits heartwarming and a good reminder of the mission and successes of the Corporation.

Mr. Eisner introduced Rudy Mazariegos as the newly-appointed Chief Information Officer and Jerry Bridges as the newly-confirmed Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Eisner thanked Kim Sweet for her work as the Acting Chief Information Officer and in overseeing the search for the new Chief Information Officer. Mr. Eisner expressed appreciation for Andrew Kleine for his extraordinary work as the Acting Chief Financial Officer.

### **Program Committee Report**

Dottie Johnson reported in the absence of Donna Williams, Chair of the Program Committee. She praised Research and Policy Director Bob Grimm's work on evaluations. The most-noteworthy evaluation report, comparing volunteer levels among states, will be forthcoming at the National Conference in Seattle in June.

Ms. Johnson discussed the Streamlining Committee, formed with the purpose of eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles. In the short term, the Streamlining Committee will focus on the application process, reporting, and other documentation that is collected or required for grantees to maintain. She welcomed outside opinions and suggestions to the Streamlining Committee on these points.

## **Communications Committee Report**

Leona White Hat spoke in the absence of the Committee Chair, Henry Lozano. The Corporation has been working to raise awareness, build partnerships, and conduct outreach to meet goals of its five-year strategic plan. Recent activities on mentoring include a joint press conference with HUD Secretary Jackson, a roundtable discussion with mentoring leaders, the release of a new research report, and the creation of a national mentoring working group to provide input to the new Federal Mentoring Council.

Ms. White Hat reported that the Get Involved public service ad campaign to engage more Baby Boomers to volunteer has already earned more than \$1.3 million in donated airtime, and more than 41,000 people have visited the website [www.getinvolved.org](http://www.getinvolved.org). A variety of events were held during National Volunteer Week in April, with 21 cabinet members and high-ranking administration officials participated in volunteering events. CEO David Eisner's trip with President Bush to the Gulf Coast spotlighted the 21,000 national service volunteers who have already given more than 1.2 million hours of service in the Gulf. A new radio campaign featuring President Bush and members of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation was distributed to 9,000 radio stations. These ads encourage Americans to volunteer and visit [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov) to find local volunteering opportunities.

Ms. White Hat stated that the Committee will be focusing on raising the national identity of AmeriCorps and focusing on the Corporation goal of increasing volunteers to 75 million by 2010.

## **Management Committee Report**

Jack Lew reported that the Corporation had shown improved efficiency in the previous quarter. The Committee anticipated that the consolidation of the field offices and call centers will improve the quality of service.

Mr. Lew reported that the Corporation staff is focusing on showing progress on all government-wide financial performance metrics. Mr. Lew noted recent improvements in the areas of accounts receivable and electronic payment. With these metrics, the committee will be able to monitor progress on a monthly basis. The Corporation has addressed corrective actions in the area of human capital, specifically in the areas of personnel and payroll management.

Mr. Lew discussed the implementation of a uniform risk assessment protocol for grant oversight monitoring. Lastly, there are now internal controls in place to meet strategic plan objectives in the area of management excellence.

## Public Comment

Gina Hanson, the VISTA coordinator for the Webster Habitat for Humanity in Springhill, Louisiana, related her experiences helping refugees in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Ms. Hanson was able to use her contacts as a VISTA coordinator to find additional locations to house refugees and gather resources. She attributes her ability to touch lives and meet the refugees' needs to her service with VISTA.

Dennis Maloney, former VISTA member, spoke of his VISTA experiences as transformative in his own life and instrumental in his efforts to incorporate service into rehabilitating youth while working in community justice and correctional systems. He articulated that by engaging citizens in service, they develop a lifelong sense of responsibility to their community. He has written books on reforming the justice system to a service-centered system, influencing at least 30 states to rewrite the purpose clause of their juvenile justice code to incorporate service. Recently, he has worked with VISTA members on the prisoner re-entry initiative. He reflected on the Corporation's cooperation with the Department of Justice in this effort and recommended that service be used as a preventative measure to keep people out of prison.

Mr. Maloney recommended that the mentoring programs be altered to incorporate service into the relationship. He is working on this effort with Myrlie Evers, Medgar Evers' widow. Her paper, "Journey to Stewardship," features the concept that people who are treated as solely recipients of service rather than contributors, reciprocity never becomes an expectation and they never become engaged citizens. Lastly, he discussed the formation of Civic Justice Corps, which will enable incarcerated citizens to volunteer, thereby enhancing their rehabilitation and making them more attractive job candidates when they return to society. He commended the "Guide to Effective Citizenship," composed by AmeriCorps members, already present in prisoner re-entry programs.

Ms. Kinsley asked how the current presence of community service in corrective institutions as a punitive measure could be reconfigured to be seen as a positive thing. Mr. Maloney answered that much of the community service is of the "chain gang" variety and is mandatory. His program is solely voluntary. Ms. Kinsley recommended suggesting that judges distinguish punitive community service from positive, voluntary community service by referring to the former by a different term, such as "community restitution." William Schambra emphasized Mr. Maloney's mention of the role of faith in encouraging incarcerated citizens to volunteer. He expressed concern that Civic Justice Corps might have trouble attracting private funding. Mr. Maloney responded that Civic Justice Corps partners with community organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, to provide them with needed volunteer services as well as private organizations such as the New York Jet Foundation.

Shayne Del Cohen, former VISTA volunteer, voiced her appreciation for the VISTA program. She expressed how it had impacted her life positively and emphasized a focus on the "roots" of VISTA such as instilling in society an ethic of community service.

Mimi Mager saluted Ms. Hanson, Mr. Maloney, and Ms. Del Cohen on their important work and ongoing commitment. She praised the book published in honor of VISTA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary including stories such as theirs about how VISTA had changed communities and improved the lives of those who participated. Included in this book are stories of VISTA alumni in Congress, such as Congressman John Lewis and Congresswoman Gwen Moore. Congresswoman Gwen Moore's story of transformation from a recipient of public aid to a VISTA member to a member of Congress is exemplary of the potential positive impact of the VISTA program. Ms. Mager asked all VISTA members and alumni to stand in the room for applause.

Ms. Mager read the following resolution into the record:

*Whereas, for more than forty years Volunteers In Service to America, now known as AmeriCorps\*VISTA, has made an extraordinary contribution to eradicating poverty in America, and whereas AmeriCorps\*VISTA members have improved the lives of our nation's most vulnerable citizens by fighting illiteracy, improving health services, reducing unemployment, increasing housing opportunities, reducing crime and recidivism, and expanded access to technology, and*

*Whereas, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members develop programs, recruit community volunteers, raise funds, manage projects, and otherwise build the capacity of non-profit organizations to become sustainable, thereby strengthening America's non-profit sector and low income communities, and*

*Whereas, VISTA has engaged more than 177,000 Americans of every age, every walk of life and service to meet vital needs, and has helped create generations of social entrepreneurs committed to a lifetime of active citizenship, and*

*Whereas, last year AmeriCorps\*VISTA members served with more than 1,600 local projects, raised more than \$157 million in case and in-kind resources for their projects, and recruited or managed 509,000 community volunteers, an average of 76 volunteers per AmeriCorps\*VISTA member, and*

*Whereas, to recognize VISTA's proud history, the Corporation is holding commemorative events, and is releasing a new book of stories of VISTA members through the decades called "VISTA – In Service to America" as a way to highlight VISTA's extraordinary accomplishments, and recruit new AmeriCorps\*VISTA members, project sponsors, and private sector support,*

*We have Resolved, this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2006, that the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service expresses its profound appreciation for all that AmeriCorps\*VISTA has accomplished, salutes the 177,000 men and women who have answered VISTA's call to service, and encourage other Americans to join AmeriCorps\*VISTA and continue its proud legacy of service to America.*

The Board approved the resolution without objection.

Chairman Goldsmith presented Ms. Mager with a VISTA montage as an expression of appreciation for her work as the Board's leading champion of VISTA.

Sue Connor, a Retired Senior Volunteer Program director in New Hampshire, spoke on behalf of the newly founded Senior Corps Association of America to serve the needs of all three Senior Corps programs. The SCAA was launched in mid-March and will serve as a professional, educational, and support group for Senior Corps project directors as well as businesses, corporations, and other entities supporting Senior Corps programs. The SCAA is still being organized, but has established a website at [scaatoday.org](http://scaatoday.org). The goal of SCAA is to unify the efforts behind the three Senior Corps programs, which, while structurally dissimilar, serve the same purpose. The SCAA intends on cooperating with pre-existing associations developed to support the individual Senior Corps programs.

Seung Yu, the Executive Director of the State Education Agency K-12 Service Learning Network at the Academy for Educational Development (SEANet) discussed SEANet and its appreciation of the Learn and Serve America Program. SEANet is a national network of state directors, administrators, and other staff dedicated to providing a unified national vote to promote and sustain service learning. SEANet members are responsible for developing statewide service learning initiatives, building support for service learning in their states, providing technical support and professional development for teachers, school administrators, and their community partners, and administering K-12 school-based learn and Serve America grants. SEANet members are committed to sustaining and expanding high quality service learning initiatives within their states and across the country. SEANet works to identify, develop, and disseminate information, resources, and partnerships that initiate and institutionalize the K-12 school-based service learning methodology.

Mr. Yu noted that on the previous day, Joe Follman, a SEANet member from Florida Learn and Serve, shared stories with the Board of service learning activities in his state. Mr. Yu commented that this sort of service learning is now present in about one third of public schools, but that he hoped soon that number will reach fifty percent of all public schools. Mr. Yu expressed concern over the fiscal year 2007 proposed funding level of \$34.2 million for Learn and Serve America and the detrimental effect the proposed cut would have on service learning's momentum. SEANet is dedicated to ensuring that Learn and Serve America remains top on the minds for congressional members during the appropriation process. They have joined in the collective efforts of Service-Learning United, Voices for National Service, and all of the other groups dedicated to bring full attention to Learn and Serve America and its funding situation. On behalf of SEANet, he strongly urged everyone in the room to lend support to Learn and Serve America.

Mr. Goldsmith commented that the state education associations were varied in respect to their commitment to service learning. He inquired as to how SEANet operated to expose those who were new to service learning, or with fewer resources, to those who were more effective. Mr. Yu responded that the mission of SEANet in general is to communicate

with these associations, particularly the newer members, and provide them with education, resources, technical assistance, and broad awareness. It also works to put the different associations in communication with one another to educate each other.

My Dysart, the Director of Recovery for St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana, thanked the Corporation for the assistance it has provided to his community through its programs. He read this letter into the record as follows:

*“As the director of Recovery for St. Bernard Parish, I wish to acknowledge the monumental accomplishments of the AmeriCorps\*NCCC team members which have supported our recovery efforts. Let me preface my comments with the fact that I have no previous affiliations with the organization prior to their assignment to this Parish. In December of 2005, the parish developed and submitted a plan for the removal of health and safety hazards internal to the residential structures of the Parish, of which we have approximately 27,000 residential and 14,000 commercial. Due to the limitations imposed by FEMA, it became evident that the Parish would have to solicit volunteers to be engaged in disaster recovery, structural cleanup, and rehab restoration activities, in furtherance of the disaster relief effort, and as a cost-effective and repopulation-accelerating alternative to otherwise unnecessary demolition of structures and more time consuming rebuilding.*

*“We envision the utilization of nearly 2,000 volunteers per week to be orchestrated towards this goal. The immediate shortfall that was identified was the staff required to conduct operational and logistical command and control over the entire operation. Since the Parish was only at 50 percent of its required staffing pre-Katrina, the personnel resident to the parish to handle these monumental tasks simply did not exist.*

*“AmeriCorps\*NCCC stepped up to the plate. AmeriCorps\*NCCC rapidly identified, developed, and implemented an Operations Command Center that coordinated all aspects of the mission. They developed tracking boards which identified all of the Rights of Entry available for use within the 33 debris zones of the Parish. They assigned specific volunteer teams to each structure, coordinated the movement of the personnel to the different zones of operation, as well as the placement of essential tools required for the accomplishments of the task.*

*“They ensured each team had the necessary sanitation services relocated daily to support our activities. They coordinated the delivery of lunches to the volunteers to maximize daily output. They provided the necessary safety staff to oversee the operations, and to ensure not only the safety of the volunteers within the Parish, but the continuity of the services provided to the citizens.*

*“They implemented a training program which resulted in identifiable and measurable reduction of hazardous material in our debris stream as well as a reduction in physical accidents requiring treatment by a physician. In addition, they implemented a process by which each of the residents received advance notification to facilitate operations and encourage local participation in the process.*

*“For the record, over 1,500 homes have benefited from this process which is being commanded and controlled nearly exclusively by AmeriCorps\*NCCC team members. The Parish would not have been able to accomplish this task but for the efforts*



*of these personnel. They have been a force multiplier of expeditious proportions.*

*“As a Colonel Select in the United States Marine Corps, I recently served on both the Marine Expeditionary Force and a Division Staff in Iraq. The competence, dedication, and capabilities of these young American citizens compares to that of the Marines I have had the distinct honor of serving with. The command and control processes, procedures and -- implemented in the ever-changing environment in which AmeriCorps\*NCCC has operated has been exemplary in every manner.*

*“If these fine men and women are indicative of the future leaders of this country, I would recommend that most of our current leadership should step aside to prevent further delays in progress.*

*“These comments are not verbose. The State of Louisiana has recognized this program as the example of how a volunteer program should be managed. The State has acquired all of our manuals, standard operating procedures, and training DVDs to distribute to other affected parishes to assist with the development of their programs. I have offered all of this assistance eagerly that we can generate for these other parishes with one exception – they cannot have my AmeriCorps teams.*

*“With that stated, I have one simple request. Should you have the ability to influence the funding for this organization, I implore you to consider the benefits they render to the citizens they serve. The service goes far beyond the dollars associated with the removal of these health and safety hazards, or the cost associated with the continuation of their program.*

*“Without hesitation I offer that until this process of removing hazards began, nearly 90 percent of the residential homes remained affected after four months. With the implementation of this plan, the removal of the hazards has increased substantially. The impact has brought the residents’ participation up dramatically in the areas where our programs operated. The neighborhoods are closer to a 30 [to] 50 percent hazard removal status. This is directly correlated to the impact this program has within each individual neighborhood.*

*“Thank you for your consideration in this matter. And if I can be of any additional – provide any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.”*

Mark Gearan thanked Mr. Dysart for his testimony, his own public service in the military, and for his role in supporting the Corporation with this letter. He also thanked him for hosting innumerable college students from across the country who came to help with relief efforts during school breaks. Mr. Dysart responded by emphasizing the difficulty of organizing the students to volunteer and how instrumental NCCC was in that effort.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.