



The Pipeline to Public Service: Profiles of AmeriCorps Alumni in Action

Nathan Rothstein
**Executive Director, New Orleans Young Urban
Rebuilding Professionals**



Nathan Rothstein graduated with an honors degree in History from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2006. During his senior year, he spent his spring break doing disaster relief work in Gulfport, MS, which first exposed him to the devastation of the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina.



Inspired by the determination of people in the area to rebuild, Rothstein decided to become an AmeriCorps member and came to live in New Orleans and join the rebuilding effort. He spent the following 10 months serving for a non-profit relief organization in New Orleans' poorest neighborhood, Tulane/Gravier, gutting homes, landscaping public areas, raising money for homeowners and recruiting volunteers. While attending many public meetings, he witnessed a community that was eager for social change, but needed a way to mobilize people to work together. To support the renewal of New Orleans, he created New Orleans Young Urban Rebuilding Professionals (NOLA YURP) as a way to help young professionals find ways to connect with each other and find the resources they need to stay in the city. Katrina "is our generation's civil rights movement," says Rothstein, 23. "People come from all over to make an impact, to have a part in history."



Awista Ayub
Founder, Afghan Youth Sports Exchange

Awista Ayub received her BS in Chemistry from the University of Rochester in New York in 2002. After college, she served with AmeriCorps NCCC at the Charleston, SC campus. "The greatest lesson AmeriCorps taught me is how to give back to the community. It shaped my present thinking because I

said, if I can give back to America, why can't I also give back to Afghanistan which has been devastated by over 25 years of war?" From February 2005 to January 2007, Ayub served as the Education and Health Officer at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, DC. In 2003, Ayub founded the Afghan Youth Sports Exchange, a non-profit organization dedicated to preparing Afghanistan's youth with leadership skills required to promote athletics in their schools and communities. In 2006 Ms. Ayub brought Afghan-American coaches to Afghanistan to organize a girls' soccer clinic in Kabul, Afghanistan working with over 250 girls through the Afghanistan National Olympic Committee. Ayub, who currently is pursuing a Masters in Public Administration, was named ABC News Person of the Week in 2006.

Pete McRoberts
Deputy Press Secretary, Governor Chet Culver (IA)

Pete McRoberts, a native Northeastern Iowan, started his civic involvement as an 18-year-old member of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps in Denver in 1994. McRoberts completed his studies in political science at the University of Northern Iowa, and received his Juris Doctorate at Drake Law School in Des Moines. National service has remained an overriding theme in his life. He views his position as a way to increase awareness of national service, something he has been dedicated to doing since he completed his AmeriCorps service. "Each day I try to find ways to get national service on someone's radar," he said. "I have found that is where my own interest and skill set are best used." He is passionate about helping develop young peoples' interest in service, in civics, and in community involvement.

(Continued)

Gwendolynne Moore
U.S. Representative, (D-Wisconsin)

Congresswoman Gwendolynne S. Moore served as a VISTA member in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1981. During her term of service, she helped create the Cream City Community Development Credit Union to offer basic banking and loans for projects that created jobs, cultivated local businesses, and contributed to the development of Milwaukee's inner city. Moore received the national "VISTA Volunteer of the Decade" award for her service from 1976-1986. Congresswoman Moore continues today to work to improve the quality of Milwaukee's housing and neighborhoods, championing legislation to foster economic prosperity and to promote progressive social issues. She serves on the Committee on Small Business, the Committee on Financial Services, and the House Budget Committee. "Through my VISTA experience, I learned the value of self-help, coalition building, interracial cooperation, and mobilization. I gained self-confidence, patience, and faith, as well as financial, networking, and organizational skills. Above all, I realized that great things can be accomplished with the collective strength of community, thus strengthening my commitment to community

Ashley Sloan
Founder, Live St. Bernard

Ashley Sloan, a native of Manhattan, Kansas, graduated from the School of Journalism at the University of Kansas with a bachelor of science in journalism and an emphasis in mass communications. Sloan served as a team leader for AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, where she was part of the large-scale deployment of AmeriCorps members helping in the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort. More than 10,000 AmeriCorps members have served in the Gulf in Katrina response, providing mass care, gutting and building homes, and managing tens of thousands of other volunteers. After her AmeriCorps service, Ashley and two of her AmeriCorps teammates, Greg Loushine and Jackie Smith, decided to form Live Saint Bernard, a non-profit organization that offers housing to volunteers helping in Katrina relief effort. "I was amazed that a year-and-a-half after the hurricanes, the community was still in ruins. Homes have cars through the roofs and FEMA trailers are lined up

and down the streets. This scene tugged at my heart and that is why I must return," Sloan said. "We wanted to start a program designed to attract and retain skilled laborers to the area."

Giselle John
Program Director, Voices for Youth

Giselle John moved to New York City from her native Tobago at the age of 14, and spent the next seven years living in foster care. She aged out of the system in August 2000 and joined Public Allies as an AmeriCorps member in 2000. Being an AmeriCorps member allowed her to transition from the foster care system to adulthood with a strong support system behind her. Public Allies placed her with Voices for Youth, an organization focused on helping other people leaving foster care. John trained people in public speaking so they could share their foster care experience with others. Young people leaving foster care often end up homeless, a risk that John said she would have run if not for AmeriCorps. When her term of service ended, John became a full-time employee of Voices for Youth. "I know that I'm called to serve young people. I know that I will continue to serve young people who are at risk," she said.

Rhonda Ulmer
Community Relations Coordinator, Johns Hopkins Health Care

Rhonda Ulmer, who completed three years of AmeriCorps service with Volunteer Maryland, recently received the Eli Segal Award from AmeriCorps Alums. She is currently studying for a degree in health care administration and working as a community relations coordinator with Johns Hopkins HealthCare LLC. The mother of three created the Van Bokkelen Family Network at the elementary school her children attended in Severn, Maryland, when the school was threatened with state takeover because of its low test scores. Recognizing the need for parental involvement, Ulmer addressed parents' needs first, fostering a sense of partnership between the school and the parents. Her application of the best practices of volunteer management to promote parental involvement is now recognized as a national model for schools and PTAs across the country.

May 2008