

# National Service and Mentoring



*More than 1 million  
children and youth  
are mentored through  
Senior Corps,  
AmeriCorps and  
Learn and Serve  
America each year.*

The Corporation for National and Community Service believes that caring adult mentors can make a critical difference in the lives of children and youth in need and has made mentoring one of its top priorities. Mentoring is a proven method to ensure students complete their education. Youth with a mentor more readily attend and engage in school and are therefore more likely to finish high school and continue their education. Mentors model the attitudes and aptitudes youth need to succeed: intellectual curiosity, compassion for others, and determination to succeed.

Participants in national service programs support mentoring by directly serving as mentors and by building the capacity of mentoring organizations through mentor recruitment and management, fundraising, and program administration. As a result of Corporation for National and Community Service support, hundreds of thousands of children and youth in need are mentored each year.

## SENIOR CORPS

Senior Corps, through its RSVP and Foster Grandparent programs, mentored more than 212,000 children and youth from disadvantaged circumstances across the United States last year. In the Foster Grandparent Program, volunteers age 55 and older provide mentoring and other support services to more than 130,000 children and youth with exceptional

needs in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, correctional institutions, and other settings. Foster Grandparents often work one-on-one with children, maintaining an intensive relationship with them for a year or longer. Last year, RSVP volunteers provided mentoring services to more than 82,000 children. Examples include:

- At the El Paso Foster Grandparent Program in El Paso, TX, 12 Foster Grandparents work with 30 children who attend the Fort Bliss Child Development Center. The children, who range from 2 to 5 years old, exhibit signs of adjustment disorders, detachment disorders, and/or developmental delays due to the absence of one or more parents who serve in the military. The Foster Grandparents provide nurturing and emotional support, engage in play therapy, and model appropriate behavior to help the children reach developmental milestones.
- The RSVP School Buddies program in Burlington, VT, matches volunteers age 55 and older with elementary school children whom teachers have identified as not meeting current academic standards. Volunteers serve 1-2 hours per day, 1-2 times per week for an entire school year, assisting children with reading, math, spelling, or other academic areas. In the past year, 32 volunteers served 223 children at nine sites providing more than 1,700 hours of service.

## AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps members, serving through AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), provide mentoring to more than 800,000 children and youth in need each year. While State and National members mostly serve directly as mentors, VISTAs focus their efforts on

building the capacity of mentoring organizations to increase the number of people they serve by recruiting community volunteers, devising business plans, setting up administrative operations, bringing in donations of goods and services, and raising funds. Examples include:

- The Mentor Michigan College Coaching Corps, a joint effort between Michigan Campus Compact and Mentor Michigan, uses AmeriCorps members to increase the number of youth served through mentoring relationships and to develop "college-going" cultures within local communities. Members increase the capacity of youth mentoring organizations by engaging in mentor recruitment; mentor/mentee matching, and providing ongoing support to matches. Members placed within institutions of higher education train college students to be volunteers, build community partnerships among K-12 schools, community-based organizations, and their host campus; and develop and disseminate resources related to college access.
- AmeriCorps VISTA Michael Curtis serves with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tucson, AZ, where his efforts support mentoring services for nearly 600 disadvantaged youth. One of the first matches Curtis made included a boy who was struggling a great deal. The 'Big Brother' that Curtis recruited was a tremendous help to the 'Little Brother,' who lost both his parents within months of each other and is being raised by his sister who is bedridden. The youth was occasionally acting out and his grades were slipping. Since being introduced to his Big Brother, the Little Brother has improved his grades and behavior and shows a positive attitude toward life and new experiences.

## LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA

Learn and Serve America programs at higher education institutions, K-12 schools, and community organizations mentored more than 143,000 children and youth from

disadvantaged circumstances across the United States. Examples include:

- The Campus Corps program of Colorado State University (CSU) makes the connection between the economic crisis, increasing poverty, increasing juvenile delinquency, and the declining capability of social service agencies to deal with these conditions. In response to recent state legislation mandating that judicial districts develop stronger and more coordinated community systems to better serve youth in need and their families, Campus Corps developed a two-semester service-learning course. This initiative engages undergraduates from four university departments in one-on-one mentorship, educational and vocational support, extracurricular activities, and community projects with as many as 950 at-risk youth a year. Campus Corps aims to reduce recidivism rates for first-time youth offenders aged 10-18 and provides opportunities and training for both these youth and CSU students to become more skilled, civically engaged human service professionals and community leaders.
- In Cloquet, MN, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa has established a Youth Engagement Zone to engage students who haven't received the support they need to finish high school. The project implements the national mentoring program Check & Connect to help students engage, learn, and achieve. Check & Connect is structured to maximize personal contact and opportunities to create trusting relationships. Building on this successful system, the local high school integrates mentored service-learning projects in the core curriculum to address the need for social or financial entrepreneurship, increasing economic opportunities for community members from disadvantaged circumstances. With the help of partners such as the Reservation Business Committee, the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, and the National Youth Leadership Council, the Youth Engagement Zone will help students graduate ready for college, work, and life.

## **SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND**

The Social Innovation Fund provides funding for a broad portfolio of evidence-based innovative programs, including mentoring organizations. One of the Social Innovation Fund intermediary grantees, New Profit, provided a \$750,000 subgrant to iMentor, whose mission is to improve the lives of high school students from underserved communities through innovative, technology-enabled mentoring. Since 1999, iMentor has matched and supported more than 7,000 one-to-one mentoring relationships in New York City and through their technology platform, iMentor Interactive, the organization works with 60 mentoring programs in 20 states enrolling 4,500 mentor-mentee pairs.

## **FEDERAL MENTORING COUNCIL**

Led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Federal Mentoring Council, comprised of representatives from a host of federal government agencies, was established to secure more successful futures for our nation's youth by closing the mentoring gap and creating new mentoring opportunities through leveraging the expertise, resources, and influence of government agencies. The Council works to ensure the effective and efficient coordination of the investment of federal resources in mentoring activities.

## **NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH**

National Mentoring Month, held each year in January, shines a spotlight on mentoring and the positive effect it can have on young lives. Spearheaded by the Harvard Mentoring Project of the Harvard School of Public Health, MENTOR, and the Corporation for National and Community Service, the goals of National Mentoring Month are to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to mentor, and promote the growth of mentoring by recruiting organizations to engage their constituents in mentoring. January 2011 will mark the 10th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, and this year's campaign focuses on mentoring as a strategy for boosting academic achievement.

## **CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and the Social Innovation Fund, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit **NationalService.gov**.

*February 2011*