

Transforming Communities through Service:



a collection of 51 of the most
innovative americorps programs in the
united states



a project by:



About ICP:

Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) is a non-profit organization that provides expertise, ideas, information, research, and advocacy support in the United States and around the world to develop and strengthen policies and programs that promote youth civic engagement through service. ICP applies service as a strategy to address a wide range of issues such as conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS prevention, and after school care for children and youth. In the US, ICP focuses its efforts on broadening and deepening support for national and community service by developing pathways and transition strategies for AmeriCorps members after service, identifying and supporting innovative state programming, and promoting discussions among policymakers, funders, and practitioners in specific issue areas such as children and youth in out-of-school time, rural development, and independent living for seniors. For more information, visit www.icicp.org.

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**A report by *Innovations in Civic
Participation (ICP)***

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Foreword

Just over a decade ago, AmeriCorps began as a new and innovative way to meet local community needs. Rather than impose solutions from the top down, AmeriCorps was created to work from the bottom up. AmeriCorps channels most of its funds to state service commissions, appointed by Governors, which then award grants to groups meeting locally determined needs in locally determined ways. AmeriCorps members help expand these group's reach and impact, but they don't dictate how to provide services or achieve the organization's mission.

Meeting local needs in local ways was not the only purpose behind the program, however. AmeriCorps also sought to strengthen communities and to improve the lives of members themselves, in part by offering AmeriCorps Education Awards to help those who serve to pay for college or to pay off college loans.

Over the years, grants have been made to thousands of organizations in every state of the union, as well as to Native American tribes and to groups in U.S. territories. The breadth and diversity of programs supported has been astounding. In some cases, the AmeriCorps model has proved to be more successful than in others. But all told, the program has done tremendous good for the 400,000 Americans who have served in the program, the thousands of communities in which they have served, and the tens of millions of people who've benefited from their energy and idealism.

We appreciate the efforts of Innovations in Civic Participation in undertaking this project, which highlights 51 innovative AmeriCorps programs in 38 states. This volume is chock full of powerful examples of AmeriCorps members making a difference in some of the toughest issues facing our communities – poverty, illiteracy, homelessness and more. While the Corporation for National and Community Service was not involved in selecting these examples, we are delighted that state service commissions were, which is in keeping with AmeriCorps' philosophy of devolution and local control.

Many of stories of the service provided by these programs are inspiring, and in many case the lives of both national service clients and participants are transformed. We hope that this book inspires individuals, nonprofit groups, foundations, and others to learn more about AmeriCorps programs in their state, and to become part of the national service family.

Thanks again to ICP for undertaking this project, and I hope you enjoy reading about these programs as much as I did.

Sincerely,

Rosie Mauk
Director of AmeriCorps
Corporation for National and Community Service

"Your World. Your Chance to Make It Better."
Learn how.
Visit www.americorps.org or call 1-800-942-2677.
www.nationalservice.org

Dear Friends of National Service,

You know that national service can transform communities, now we can prove it with concrete examples. Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) and the American Association of State Service Commissions (ASC) are proud to share, "Transforming Communities through Service: A Collection of 51 of the Most Innovative AmeriCorps Programs in the United States."

This is an exciting illustration of innovative AmeriCorps programs from 38 states. Programs from Alabama to Wisconsin shared their tremendously creative and meaningful programs making a difference in the lives of Americans. We hope that you will review this powerful tool and share it with others who might need to know how AmeriCorps is making a difference in communities.

Each of the programs included in this compilation shares a common story -- that AmeriCorps can address a wide array of community needs in effective and innovative ways. Whether a program recruits mentors, preserves our environment, helps children read, empowers persons with disabilities to serve, or provide direct assistance to at-risk low-income seniors, AmeriCorps works.

ICP and ASC would like to thank the Ford Foundation for its generous support. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the Project Advisory Team and Project Evaluation Team, as well as the ICP and ASC staff who worked diligently to be sure that we gather the best examples of "getting things done."

Sincerely,

Susan Stroud
Executive Director
Innovations in Civic Participation
(ICP)

Kyle Caldwell
Chairman
American Association of State
Service Commissions (ASC)



Preface

With generous support from the Ford Foundation, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) and America's Service Commissions (ASC) have gathered information about some of the most innovative AmeriCorps programs in the United States. Many of these programs have been lauded as highly successful and innovative, yet this information has not been widely shared. By sharing this information with practitioners, policymakers, funders, and the general public, we hope to support the role of states as incubators and foster new strategies for addressing a variety of critical issues in communities across the country.

The following pages showcase 51 remarkable AmeriCorps programs in 38 states. Program profiles are listed by state - although not every state was able to submit a program - and further classified by each program's service focus and individual issue area. Each profile provides the program's mission and goals, a brief description, key innovative elements, contact information, and examples of the program's success.

Each State Commission was asked to nominate at least one, but no more than two, of their most innovative programs. Each application was reviewed by at least three readers from the Evaluation Committee. Traditionally, innovative is defined as something that has never been done or experienced before. This project utilized a more open and inclusive definition. A program could be innovative in its use of funding, innovative in its partnerships, or innovative in its sustained impact on members or the community. In order to be considered for this project, a program must include at least one of the following characteristics:

- Lasting impact on members, community, or state
- Supporting data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or unique partnerships
- Cross-program connections (i.e. AmeriCorps working with Senior Corps)
- Outstanding volunteer and/or resource generation
- Potential for replication in other states

The variety and impact of the programs included in this publication is awe-inspiring. From mentoring children to patrolling public parks, national and community service programs are providing opportunities for citizens to play an active role in addressing community needs. We hope that practitioners will be able to use the information in this publication to strengthen their own work, that policymakers and funders will be moved to increase their support for the field, and that everyone who reads these profiles will be inspired by the extraordinary tales of ordinary citizens transforming their communities through service.

Brett Alessi
Project Coordinator
May 2005

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Program Profiles:

**51 of the most innovative americorps programs
in the united states**



ALABAMA

AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Literacy

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Contact Information

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AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team

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Program Mission and Goals

The mission of AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team (AIST) is to provide each student, through well defined instructional programs, with diversified extracurricular activities and appropriate student support personnel services, the opportunity to achieve maximum success in academic performance and to further enhance student options, and opportunities in leading successful and productive lives.

The AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team goals include the following:

- Members provide early intervention to 65 (100%) rural preschool students and their parents at risk of school failure in order to master 75% of basic skills to enter kindergarten well prepared.
- 70 rural at-risk students and their parents are improving their school readiness skills and attitudes toward beginning kindergarten.
- 100% of 80 rural preschool students and their parents at risk of school failure master 75% of the basic skills for school readiness.
- All 20 (100%) AmeriCorps members will successfully complete a 60-hour Instructional Support Certification as evidenced by certification records.
- In order to build sustainability for the AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team, the members will recruit and involve 35 community volunteers serving a total of cumulative 2,500 hours.

Program Description

The Butler County Board of Education AmeriCorps Program is focused on education-school success. The program focuses the efforts of AmeriCorps members on school readiness and improving academic performance of 240 rural K-1 students at risk of school failure. The need for the AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team is evidenced by the following information: Alabama ranks 47th in the nation in child well-being, Butler County ranks 41st in 67 counties; 80% of elementary school students are living below poverty level and eligible for free/reduced lunch; 33% of Butler County residents 18 years and older do not have a high school diploma and another 20% have no education beyond high school.

AmeriCorps members tutor students in all the public elementary schools, in public pre-school classrooms (i.e. Even-Start, Bright Beginnings and Head Start) and

in after-school programs in both public schools and community locations. All public schools in Butler County are school-wide Title I programs. The impact of this objective not only allows at-risk students to be served, but also provides great community collaboration.

The AmeriCorps Instructional Support team program provides early intervention services to 65 pre-school children and their parents. The High Scope Assessment of readiness skills is used as an evaluation tool. The program's goal is 100% of 65 children master 75% of readiness skills. Parent services include literacy training and parenting skills. These services include working with local nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups to improve the quality of personal, family, and community life. The program also provides in-school tutoring and afterschool literacy activities for 185 K-1 students who are at risk for school failure. The goal is for 65% of these students to improve in at least one academic subject by one letter grade. Program members also work to change attitudes about school. Members act as mentors and role models as well as provide individual and group projects for students. The program also seeks 65% of the 185 students to improve one conduct grade.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

All 20 members are required to become certified instructors by Auburn University at Montgomery and receive a certificate after successfully completing the ten-day, 60-hour course. The certification class prepares members to enter the classroom by requiring 60 hours of pre-service training. Topics covered during this training include learning styles, child development, reading and language development, math strategies, effective tutoring methods, and class art. This class prepares members not only for their current year of service but also for life after AmeriCorps. They are equipped to obtain employment in the school system as well as with community- and faith-based agencies. Rather than leaving the community for employment, some former members are able to remain because of the certification they receive through their AmeriCorps experience. Former members are now active volunteers and community members as well as AmeriCorps program staff. Some members have used their education award to complete a bachelor's degree in addition to post-graduate degrees in various fields including medicine, media, business, and law. The children and parents they serve view them as role models in the community. Some of their career and life choices were heavily influenced by their AmeriCorps experience. Some members have chosen to remain in the community to make a difference in their hometown.

Supporting Data

Written surveys, member evaluations from teachers, discussion during faculty meetings with the AmeriCorps program staff, member meetings, volunteer surveys, and a review of annual performance measurements, all show a lasting impact to the community. Member evaluations express how they have grown and improved, not only with skills associated with the program but also life skills in general, making them better and more productive citizens and community members. AmeriCorps is a vital part of the school system and community, evidenced by the support of the community and the accolades it receives year after year for making Butler County a better place to live.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The program works very closely with Learn and Serve America in Butler County doing various projects throughout the year. The State of Alabama selected Butler County's W.O. Parmer Elementary School to be a demonstration site for the Alabama Reading Initiative.

President George W. Bush commended W.O. Parmer Elementary students, faculty and staff in San Diego, California in June 2002.

Cross-program Connections

As stated previously, the program works closely with Learn and Serve throughout the year in the community. The AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team hosted the state-wide Make A Difference Day 2000, sponsored by the Alabama Commission. The Butler County Board of Education and Learn and Serve participated in this event helping to achieve greater impact.



Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team has involved 175 Partners-In-Education and members have recruited over 173 community volunteers who have provided a cumulative total of 10,396 hours of service over the past years including 1020 hours served by 35 volunteers during 2003-2004 program year. AmeriCorps members show strong leadership by recruiting and managing volunteers during the service year. Members ensure volunteers are informed and involved in AmeriCorps to renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community. Over the past six years, the program has exceeded their goal each year to involve more

community volunteers in their program. In order to expose members and the volunteers to the various opportunities of national service, members also participate with other AmeriCorps programs.

Successes

The AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team has addressed the specific need of education-school success. Over 1350 rural at-risk students in kindergarten through third grade have seen improvement in grades and their attitudes toward school. In addition, 150 rural pre-school students and their caregivers have developed tools, skills, and the confidence to make sure children are well prepared when they enter kindergarten. The AIST has made a profound impact in Butler County, Alabama.

AIST has involved 175 Partners-In-Education and members have recruited over 173 community volunteers who have provided a cumulative total of 10,396 hours of service over the past years including 1020 hours served by 35 volunteers during the current year. The State of Alabama selected Butler County's W. O. Parmer Elementary School to be a demonstration site for the Alabama Reading Initiative. President George W. Bush commended W. O. Parmer Elementary students and faculty specifically in San Diego, California in June 2002.

Previous grants have been published in USA Today, Kiwanis International Magazine and Community Schools Across America. Harris Wofford, former CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) highlighted AmeriCorps Instructional Support Team and their accomplishments to the United States Senate.

ALABAMA

University of Alabama at Birmingham Civitan AmeriCorps

Focus: Unmet Human
Needs
Issue Area: Disabilities

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

Contact Information

*Governor's Office of Faith-
Based and Community
Initiatives*

www.goncs.state.al.us

Christine Williams,
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334-242-7110

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UAB Civitan AmeriCorps

[http://www.circ.uab.edu/Life/a
mcorps.htm](http://www.circ.uab.edu/Life/amcorps.htm)

Brenda Campbell, Program
Director

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Program Mission and Goals

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Civitan AmeriCorps:

- provides assistance with the activities of daily living to people with disabilities in the Greater Birmingham Area;
- promotes the educational development of the members; and
- promotes awareness of the valuable contributions of people with disabilities.

UAB Civitan AmeriCorps goals include:

- Increase independence, productivity, community integration and quality of life for individuals with temporary and lifelong disabilities;
- Increase AmeriCorps members' (ACMs) level of knowledge on how to assist a person with a disability and greater understanding and acceptance of all people;
- Expand volunteer capacity by training members to recruit volunteers;
- Increase member's leadership skills.

Program Description

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Civitan AmeriCorps provides assistance with the activities of daily living to people with disabilities in the Greater Birmingham Area, to promote the educational development of the members and awareness of the valuable contributions of people with disabilities. The program provides personal assistance to individuals living with lifelong and temporary disabilities. One of the strengths of this program is the strong emphasis on recruiting and supporting members with disabilities who demonstrate to themselves, their fellow members, and their service recipients that people with disabilities have much to offer. The program offers an educational opportunity for Alabamians to increase the independence, productivity, and community integration of all people. Individuals with and without disabilities provide support services to individuals and families of adults with disabilities. Services are tailored to the needs of each family and include personal assistance, transportation, respite care, tutoring and job coaching, independent living, employment support, futures planning, and community inclusion.

UAB's AmeriCorps Member Support will be trained in the area of CPR/First Aid and Respite Training by a certified CPR/First Aid. ACMs will be trained in specific disabilities topics and will learn how to use specific assistive technology. Other topics of training will include issues related to people with disabilities such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), People First language, and other special services for individuals with disabilities. As necessary, ACMs will receive additional training in the specific disabilities of the clients they serve.

Members will be responsible for volunteer orientation and management. Orientation will include AmeriCorps' mission as well as the Corporation of National and Community Service's philosophy toward community service. Members will train volunteers in the ethics of service and the expectation of volunteers for specific projects. This will be an opportunity for members to put newly gained leadership skills into action.

Member training is the basic foundation to ensure families and agencies receive the maximum service. The 44 AmeriCorps members will provide independent living assistance (bathing, feeding, toileting), daily living support (reading mail, preparing and paying bills, transportation to grocery shopping and other household assistance), and respite to 150 individuals with lifelong & temporary disabilities in homes, agencies and community settings, 1-2 days per week for 2-4 hours.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Through participation in community service activities in addition to ACMs assigned activities, the ACMs develop an ethic of service and positive civic values. Members volunteer for extra assignments and have agreed to complete 25 to 50 additional hours of community service, over and above their required hours for completion. In addition, not only does UAB's AmeriCorps Program service people with disabilities, but it also has members with disabilities. Fellow corps members often provide support to those members with disabilities in the areas of transportation and daily living activities. This is another example of members putting into practice what they have learned in training. For members without disabilities, the relationships formed help change their image of having a disabled coworker.

Supporting Data

Data collected from initial site visits and monthly site visits assist in measuring the value of the service provided by members to individuals being served. Monthly letters from members provide documentation of the personal growth gained from the members' service experience.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Members are trained in volunteer recruitment and then asked to recruit volunteers to participate in one or more community service projects throughout the year. Members are asked to invite individuals to participate or shadow members if they are uncertain of the responsibilities of a volunteer. This approach is a way of reaching out to individuals who have an interest in community service but are unsure about how to get involved in the community.

Potential for Replication:

This program model can be easily replicated by others. Training for individuals is easily obtained and supported by many community health and service agencies. Many service organizations are willing to provide hands-on training to receive the extra support that will make a difference and assist in achieving their goals and objectives.

Successes

In the past three years, the AmeriCorps members have continued the legacy of service established from the beginning of the program. In 1999-2000, members worked with 131 families and individuals, 70 at-risk children, and tutored 54 students in reading, math and other subjects. They assisted in building three wheelchair ramps, and partnered with 25 community agencies and schools to assist them in meeting their mission for people with disabilities. Twelve members exceeded their required hours of service, and six community volunteers added 225 hours of volunteer service to the corps total.



The program year 2001-2002 enrolled 25 full and part-time members. Sixty-two individuals and families with disabilities were served, along with 14 agencies and schools. In addition to the services provided, members have received invaluable training in such areas as leadership, public speaking, ethic of service, CPR, First Aid, Personal Assistance Services (PAS), conflict resolution, diversity awareness and personal growth. They have kept journals revealing the impact of their introduction to the world of people with disabilities, and many have changed their career goals as a result of their AmeriCorps experience. A number of former members have been employed in schools and agencies in which they served as AmeriCorps members.

The impact of UAB's AmeriCorps program has been both dynamic and mutual, making a real difference in the lives of individuals and families served, and in the lives of the members providing the service. Families have had more opportunities to live the quality of life they desire than would have been possible without AmeriCorps.

ALASKA

Nine Star AmAK Literacy

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Employment

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

Contact Information

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Nine Star AmAK Literacy

<http://www.ninestar.com/AmeriCorps/volunteer.htm>

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Program Mission and Goals

Nine Star Enterprises' Mission:

Develop Alaska's workforce through education, job readiness, and employee development – to help Alaskans get a job, keep a job, and advance on the job.

Program Description

Nine Star has been a multi-statewide project since October 1994. Over 10 years more than 200 members have worked with children, youth, and families in urban and rural communities. Wherever there is a large pocket of under- and unemployed residents, AmeriCorps members play a role. The project's focus is to:

- Build community partnerships that leverage resources and tools to ready the under- and unemployed as they leave the public assistance rolls;
- Provide literacy instruction, work readiness skills, computer skills development, and testing services to prepare people to enter or advance in the work force;
- Increase the capacity of staff members to prepare clients for the workplace through tutoring, job coaching resources, innovative workshops, and case management services;
- Engage youth in career and job preparation;
- Create a bank of volunteers who mentor, tutor, and coach program participants who need literacy and work readiness skills development;
- Share members with neighborhood community and faith-based organizations that operate literacy and career development centers to increase the employment services in neighborhoods where transportation is an issue for the under- and unemployed.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

A primary reason for Nine Star's recognized excellence is the community role of their AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members. Members identify community needs with collaborating agencies in an on-going analysis of literacy levels and employment issues. Planning sessions determine neighborhood needs. Besides education and employment activities, additional service projects this past year included a community

blood and bone marrow drive, assisting children with disabilities learn to ski, recycling, Red Ribbon Week activities, food distribution, and picking up litter at the State Fair. Members worked with many community agencies to make the lives of their new-found friends better. They also became ambassadors for AmeriCorps in the process.

Supporting Data

Nine Star designed and implemented a complex data base which tracks service to clients and the impact of those services. State, WIA, and DOL databases verify the data of GED recipients and job placement/advancement.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships and Cross-program Connections

Nine Star's greatest strength lies in its ability to integrate the resources of its literacy and employment grants/programs with its local and statewide partners – this includes the strategic placement of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members throughout Alaska. Nine Star is one of only 12 U.S. adult literacy programs recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for quality partnerships in adult learning. There are over 150 active community and business partnerships in place in Anchorage alone and another 200 in other statewide AmeriCorps service locations. Members support clients, staff, and partners in all areas. They are often cross-trained so they can help in a school or with a senior who needs computer instruction or in the career development lab.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Members stimulate resources for clients through the program's partnerships. Nine Star is engaged in neighborhood councils, youth coalitions, One-Stop Centers, statewide service activities, etc., and members play a key role in the generation and maintenance of these partnerships.

Potential for Replication

Learning the keys to building relationships with partners and understanding the "How-To's" of leveraging resources makes Nine Star's education and employment model a replicable project. This philosophy and training is already in place with many of Nine Star's partners.

Successes

- Helped over 5,500 children, youth, adults, and seniors prepare for the world of work through improved basic skills and computer literacy.
- Assisted program participants in obtaining more than 900 different jobs.
- Aided 356 students in receiving their GED.
- Provided education and employment services in conjunction with 350 statewide partners.
- Shared curricula, licenses and training for PLATO basic skills internet instruction.
- Developed business relationships that supported the hiring of public assistance clients.
- Designed and produced public service announcements in a youth media class.
- Shared grant resources with community agencies to bolster the financial self-sufficiency of clients.
- Offered youth in the juvenile justice system education and employment opportunities that enhanced their success upon re-entry into mainstream life.
- Empowered ESL clients to earn increased wages.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Smart Start AmeriCorps

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Literacy and Math Skills

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The AR Smart Start program addresses literacy needs in the Mississippi River Delta region, one of the poorest areas in the U.S. with dangerously high levels of unemployment, poverty and hunger. In a concerted effort to develop critical reading and math skills in children in a seven-county area, AmeriCorps members work under the supervision of a mentor-teacher with children identified by teachers as needing extra help.

AR Smart Start AmeriCorps activities are designed to provide additional assistance in order to meet requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act:

- Increase academic achievement in reading and math of at-risk for academic failure students (as identified by their classroom teachers) in grades K-4 through one-on-one and small group tutoring;
- Increase parent involvement by working with school officials to implement quarterly sessions which teach parents how to provide at-home educational support;
- Increase community volunteer opportunities and address community-identified needs through design and implementation of Signature Projects;
- Increase tutoring skills of members through research-based literacy and math training.

Program Description

The AR Smart Start program is successfully operating in its fifth year with members placed in 20 public and two faith-based elementary schools. Members stay connected in this large geographical area through e-mail and other media, quarterly meetings, training sessions, and monthly site visits. The program has continually met the tutoring performance measure in raising students' learning as proven by pre- and post-scores on achievement tests.

Training of members has been a strong area for this program. The Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative has resident reading and math specialists who train the members in these areas, plus they work individually with members who need specific help with a particular student. Other specialists train members in technology, media, parental involvement, professionalism, personality awareness, CPR, communication skills, diversity and citizenship.

Many parents have become more involved in their children's education as a result of knowledge gained at parent meetings held each quarter. Attendance has progressively increased at these meetings.

Members develop signature projects in the communities of their service sites to engage volunteers in a civic need. Members see a need and develop a project to counter that need. This has proven to be a successful avenue for effectively engaging traditional volunteers, as well as providing opportunities for members to coordinate activities, recruit volunteers and serve as team leaders.

Member retention and completion of service hours is another strong area. The program continues to fill its allocated slots with weekly inquiries about becoming a member. The schools continue to testify to the effectiveness of AR Smart Start AmeriCorps. A recent survey resulted in a request of more AmeriCorps members at every site than are currently serving. Site principals' standard answer when questioned about slot positions is, "I'll take as many as you will give me."

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Students benefit in ways other than receiving help to perform on grade level. For some, this is the only individualized attention they get in a given day including their home environment. They are now connected to a caring adult who focuses on improving their educational opportunities for a lifetime. Members are tangible role models who guide students to feel they can achieve success in learning and that there will be a number of careers and skilled job opportunities awaiting them as they continue to positively progress in school. Parent involvement has increased as a result of knowledge gained at parent meetings held each quarter.

Community service needs have been met through Signature Projects by members. These projects are diverse: restock of food pantries and clothing pantries, needs filled for abused women and children shelters, supplies for local soldiers serving in the military, coat drives for children, retirement and nursing home projects, environmental projects, etc.

This program is a powerful avenue to growing teachers for AR Public Schools since Arkansas teachers are retiring at a rate of 2,000 per year compared to 1,100 entering the field. AmeriCorps volunteers gain practical experience in the school system as tutors. They learn how important a teacher is in the life of a student and many make teaching their career choice by using their education award to obtain a teaching certificate. Fourteen AmeriCorps alumni have been hired as classroom teachers—most of them in school districts where they served as members. As a direct result of their AmeriCorps experience, approximately 25 to 30 others have been hired by the school district as tutors, teachers' aides or substitute teachers after they completed two years of service. Many members have testified that the confidence they gained through AmeriCorps training and service has resulted in life-changing attitudes and careers.

Supporting Data

Members gain practical experience and in individual reading and mathematics assistance by working with their mentor teachers, resulting in new tutoring skills. Each mentor teacher measures improved tutoring skills of members using an assessment tool. Service delivery records documenting member attendance, service delivery, and service results as required for reporting is completed by members on a daily basis. Student achievement is monitored through the use of performance assessments and reading inventories. Pre- and post-

achievement test scores document reading and math level gains. Parent involvement meetings and Signature Projects are documented by signatures on an attendance form.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

During the most recent service year, 2,211 community volunteers were generated at 17 sites on 68 projects by 44 AmeriCorps members. School service sites generated all cash contributions and much of the in-kind resources.

Potential for Replication

AR Smart Start AmeriCorps has proved successful in 20 public and two private schools in southeast Arkansas. The program’s tutoring, parent involvement, training and volunteer recruitment strategies could easily be replicated.

Successes

- November 2001: 46 of the 73 members were enrolled as undergraduates in a College of Education or planned to use their AmeriCorps Education Award to enter the teaching profession. Seven additional members said they were considering entering the teaching field. When questioned, most members replied that they made the career choice following their service as an AmeriCorps volunteer in the local schools.
- Quantitative Data (7/1/2003 - 8/31/2003): By the end of the project year, 75 percent of students participating in individualized reading instruction demonstrated increased reading and/or math skills as measured by Stanford 9 scores (Grade level, Reading Pre-Test, Reading Post-Test and Gain followed by Math Pre-Test, Math Post-Test and Gain):

Grade	Rd/Pr	Rd/Po	Gain	Ma/Pr	Ma/Po	Gain
K	39.4	53.6	14.2	34.0	44.6	10.6
1	41.1	44.5	3.4	41.8	42.2	0.4
2	48.1	49.1	1.0	50.5	58.8	8.3
3	40.7	40.7	0.0	53.1	55.3	2.2
4	35.4	63.4	28.0	44.3	55.6	11.3

- In 2003-2004, as of March 31, the 35 full-time and eight part-time AmeriCorps members had completed 45,513 hours of service. Only one member had left the program.
- In 2003-2004, as of March 31, members had completed 40 signature service projects involving 1,712 volunteers and 2,277 service hours.
- In 2003-2004, as of March 31, members had worked with school officials to implement a total of 35 parent involvement sessions involving 500 parents of 440 students.

CALIFORNIA

California Alliance for Prevention

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Child Abuse Prevention

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The California Alliance for Prevention (*Alliance*) is a statewide child abuse prevention program, which began in 2000. The California Alliance for Prevention strives to:

- Reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect by utilizing AmeriCorps members who provide families with linkages and referrals, parent education, and advocacy through periodic, intensive home visits;
- Utilize AmeriCorps members to support the recruitment and training of episodic and intensive volunteers;
- Establish family resource centers as hubs for the community in times of disasters;
- Expand the operational, programmatic and fiscal capacity of grassroots organizations;
- Increase AmeriCorps members' knowledge and attitudes about citizenship and build social capital through increased networks and support that impact communities.

Program Description

The *Alliance* utilizes 230 AmeriCorps members in 81 community-based programs in eighteen California counties. The AmeriCorps members provide child abuse prevention services using two proven strategies: Home Visitation and Family Resource Centers.

Service levels for the second program year include: 2,176 families receiving home visitation services; 7,087 family members served by home visits; 19,919 referrals and linkages to other services; 35,559 intensive services provided through Family Resource Centers; 383 educational classes offered to 17,535 individuals; and 383 community events such as health fairs provided to 45,664 participants.

The target population of the *Alliance* is families with one or more of the following characteristics: overburdened, unemployed, having a teen mother, isolated, depressed, lacking medical care, experiencing domestic violence or substance abuse and/or having limited parenting skills.

The *Alliance* structure includes a State Steering Committee composed of the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism, Office of Child Abuse

Prevention, Child Abuse Prevention Council (administering agency), and representatives of local partners. Locally, there are fifteen county lead agencies representing eighteen counties and over 330 formal partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations.

AmeriCorps members are recruited from the communities they serve and reflect the ethnic and linguistic diversity of those they serve. They are provided with a core, standardized curriculum augmented by local training that accounts for approximately 20% of their service time.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

AmeriCorps members are free to provide essential support services such as childcare, transportation, and community outreach as they are not constrained by bureaucratic requirements or caseload quotas. The willingness of AmeriCorps members to provide services to families on nights and weekends increased access to families working full-time. In order to meet high demand and need for services, AmeriCorps members were utilized to fill the gaps and maintain service, quality and availability. The majority of counties cited community outreach, a mainstay of AmeriCorps members' activity, as the number one reason host sites have experienced an increase in client caseloads.

Supporting Data

Prior to the implementation of the *Alliance*, there were no home visiting or case management services available in Paradise Ridge, Butte County. Today, one-third of all families living in the area are served through the local Family Resource Center (FRC). In Yolo County, literacy and nutrition services provided by AmeriCorps members have dramatically increased. In Fresno, a Hmong-American AmeriCorps member working at an FRC had increased the number of Hmong families served by approximately 70%.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Alliance partnerships have leveraged funding to sustain prevention activities from the California Commission on Children and Families and other ongoing funding streams. The ability to successfully run an AmeriCorps program serves as a proving ground, providing host sites with new status and credibility within the county prevention services network.

Cross-program Connections

In Marin County, the FRC AmeriCorps staff participated on the planning committee for a county-wide Peer Summit program and a Parent University event. AmeriCorps*VISTA members also served on the planning committee and teamed up with AmeriCorps members to help plan workshops, speeches, and performances focusing on peer resources and mentoring. Both AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members also assisted with outreach, implementation, transportation, and clean up for the events.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Placer County AmeriCorps members are an excellent example of utilizing episodic volunteers to assist with community events. Members recruited volunteers from the Assistance League of Greater Placer, the Rotary Club of Roseville, and the local Girl Scouts. The AmeriCorps members and volunteers helped distribute backpacks and school supplies to over 150 kindergarten and middle school students. The volunteers received donated school supplies from schools in four towns located throughout Placer County. The students served were from low-income families in great need of school supplies for their children.

Potential for Replication

Currently, the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento is working with Prevent Child Abuse America to replicate the CAP program. Discussions have begun to take use CAP as a model for an AmeriCorps*National Direct program.

Successes

Outcomes from the program's second year evaluation include:

- Involvement with an AmeriCorps home visitor reduced the chance of substantiated child abuse and neglect by three-quarters during program participation and by one-half after program completion.
- Based on findings from an independent evaluator, service by AmeriCorps home visitors in CAP resulted in an annual estimated cost savings to the Child Welfare System of \$10 million.
- Collaboration between county agencies and grassroots organizations increased and accessible local services through Family Resource Centers decreased the demand for government services.
- Small and grassroots community-based organizations experienced an increase in capacity.
- AmeriCorps members received extensive training and development and expressed a commitment to lifelong community service.
- Families served by AmeriCorps member home visitors in intensive ongoing home visitation programs reduced their risk of abuse and neglect by 69 percent while receiving home visitation. That is, the occurrence of abuse and their involvement in the Child Protective Services program was reduced by 69 percent. The positive impact of the home visiting program was sustained up to two years after services ended. The reduced risk of child abuse or neglect is shown by the change in recidivism to Children's Protective Services (CPS) for a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect.
- Since the beginning of the California Alliance for Prevention, AmeriCorps members serving as home visitors assisted 5,161 families who were overburdened by poverty, isolation, inadequate health care or some other family stress. Home visitors provided 32,116 home visits and 48,715 related services.
- AmeriCorps members served as tutors in afterschool programs as part of CAP. Results for student learning were reported in the first year evaluation of CAP. In the participating district, four elementary schools offered an afterschool program which relied on 20 AmeriCorps members. A total of 507 students received tutoring and mentoring from AmeriCorps members in the 2002-2003 school year for an average of 61 hours. Children who participated 50 or more hours gained in math achievement on state standardized tests (the SAT9).
- Community events offered through FRCs and school-based programs included holiday celebrations, safety awareness events, health fairs, community outreach, family days and group field trips. CAP AmeriCorps members supported a total of 776 events during the last three years and an estimated 102,930 people participated.

CALIFORNIA

Community Outreach for Prevention & Education's (COPE) Clinical Care Extender AmeriCorps Program

Focus: Health and Public Safety

Issue Area: Health Care

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Clinical Care Extender (CCE) AmeriCorps (AC) Program is a core component of Community Outreach for Prevention & Education's (COPE) Health Workforce Transformation Program. COPE partners with hospitals and healthcare systems to transform the way in which the hospitals recruit, retain and train healthcare professionals, as well as to generate interest in healthcare careers among students in general. COPE's CCE AC program is an innovative program and meets a significant need in the healthcare industry. The CCE program has four main goals:

- Provide unrivaled clinical experiences and leadership opportunities for pre-health profession AC members and volunteers;
- Provide hospitals with much-needed future nursing and hospital staff through a career ladder segment of the program;
- Provide nurses and hospital staff with service and support in a significantly understaffed healthcare environment;
- Enhance the quality of patient care and patient satisfaction in hospital settings.

Program Description

The Clinical Care Extender (CCE) AmeriCorps program recruits, trains and manages minimum-time (300 hours) members and long-term, committed community volunteers. Members and volunteers are each placed at one of four partnering hospital sites (some have religious affiliations; all are non-discriminatory and provide clergy from the patient's specific religious community as requested). Members and long-term volunteers receive extensive ongoing skill and leadership training and each serves in a new patient care unit of the hospital every three months, or four department rotations in the year.

Member and volunteer training includes medical terminology, common infectious agents and an overview of various body systems, infection control, confidentiality, mandatory reporting, customer service, and cultural diversity. UCLA medical and dental students teach the medical topics portion of the

training. All students are also given an overview of vital signs. At campuses where CCE members are authorized to take vital signs, a Nurse Practitioner and EMTs further train and test the students for competency.

CCE program participants assist nurses and visit patient rooms in departments ranging from medical surgical nursing units to labor and delivery departments and operating rooms. They focus on balancing their time between assisting the nurse or nurse designate, and directly attending to the immediate needs and requests of the patients and their families. CCE program members and volunteers are thoroughly integrated into the patient care team and provide a wide range of general and unit-specific services.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

CCE program members and volunteers, along with college students, are introduced to healthcare careers early in their decision-making path. Members and volunteers play an active role on the patient care team and develop realistic expectations of the demands of various healthcare careers. COPE partners with the hospitals and healthcare organizations to develop health professional school scholarships for members and volunteers. Thus, a "pipeline" is created to develop the hospital of healthcare system's workforce.

In one year, an average of 800 members and volunteers provide well over 100,000 hours of community service at six hospitals in the Orange, Ventura and Los Angeles counties. Over 10,000 patients and families benefit from increased availability of nursing staff and one-on-one attention from CCE members. Over 900 hospital staff and management personnel have reported increased support, satisfaction, and morale. Participants have demonstrated increased knowledge about and skills in the field of healthcare, with over 70% choosing healthcare careers.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

COPE partners not only with hospitals, clinics, community centers and numerous colleges and universities, but also with many corporations who support the AmeriCorps program. For example, Gap Inc. donates money through its "money for time" program.

COPE, Citrus Valley Health Partners (CHVP) and Mount San Antonio College (Mt. SAC), wrote and received a grant to establish 24 new nursing school seats in Mt. SAC's nursing program in 2004. These spots were all filled with qualified CVHP staff and COPE AC members and volunteers. The program has been so successful that CVHP plans to fund a new class of 24 at Mt. SAC every one to two years out of hospital operating funds.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

COPE's volunteers commit to a minimum of one-year, or 248 hours. When additional volunteer opportunities arise, all members and volunteers are notified. The hospitals often have special projects that arise which are urgent in nature. Due to the number of members and volunteers available, resources can be pooled to meet the needs within the time frame. Examples of these special projects include pain management surveys; CCE members specially trained to bathe newborn babies and review patient education information with new mothers; a special cadre of trained CCE members certified as Spanish-English Medical Interpreters; and many more.

Potential for Replication

One of the most critical challenges that all hospitals face is having enough staff available to meet patient needs, especially with the recent growth in demand for inpatient care resources, California's new mandated nurse-patient ratios, and a shortage of nursing school and allied health training program resources. COPE's AC program is an innovative and long-term sustainable solution. The successful implementation of this program has served as a model. It has been replicated in four hospitals in the past two years and is being considered by many more.

Successes

- In 2003, more than 500 members and volunteers worked at Southern California hospitals for a total of 98,027 hours or 47 Full Time Equivalents. Over 10,000 patients and families were served and over 900 professional and management staff were supported.
- In aggregate for 2003, 70% of staff that responded to a survey reported that members increase staff, patient and patient family member satisfaction above 4.5 on a Likert scale of 1 to 5.
- 75% of members have demonstrated at least a 30% increase in knowledge of career opportunities and career educational prerequisites and opportunities for the healthcare field, and an increase in understanding of the healthcare system and hospitals in general. After participation in seven civic engagement lessons using the curriculum *Active Citizens: AmeriCorps in Service to America*, 100% of members have shown an increase in understanding about issues such as: characteristics of good leaders; what it takes to be an active community citizen; how laws have responded to social problems; causes and effects of specific community problems, and more.
- Staff surveys (with Likert scales of 1 to 5) that were conducted in January 2002 (n=60), August 2002 (n=144), and August 2003 (n=354) showed: *Quality of work environment*- 4.33 in January 2002, 4.4 in August 2002, 4.49 in August 2003; *Increase staff efficiency in carrying out daily responsibilities*- 4.38 in January 2002, 4.45 in August 2002, 4.53 in August 2003; *Increase in staff support to effectively perform required daily duties*- 4.37 in January 2002, 4.4 in August 2002, 4.49 in August 2003.

COLORADO CARENET

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Literacy

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The CARENET AmeriCorps program works with elementary, middle and high schools in the Adams County School District #14 (ASCD14). The goals of the program are to:

- Serve at least 600 ACSD14 students, in up to 13 district buildings, who are reading below grade level by involving them in consistent individual or small group tutoring sessions;
- Move 65% of district parents on the next level of Adult Basic Education or ESL classes by gaining support for their educational goals through interventions from AmeriCorps members;
- Actively engage students in literacy development interventions/tutoring sessions with AmeriCorps members to increase their independent reading by 10% while developing an expanded vocabulary;
- Help 55% of the students, aged preschool through high school, become better independent readers with stronger vocabularies that will allow them to achieve near or at grade level in literacy through consistent tutoring sessions, based on need, with an AmeriCorps member focused on independent reading and vocabulary development.

Program Description

The Adams County School District is located in Commerce City, just outside of Denver. The city is a low-income community with a large Hispanic population. The median family income is \$20,000. The district also battles a student mobility rate close to 50%. AmeriCorps members provide individual tutoring, small group instruction and full classroom support for literacy issues in each of the 13 schools in the district. This year the focus of the program is independent reading and all associated skills. Members also play a key role in out-of-school time programs, such as before-school programs, afterschool programs and teen centers.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

The CARENET AmeriCorps program uses the documents provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, We the People, and A Guide for

Effective Citizenship Through National Service. The unique way the program uses these tools plays a large part in its effectiveness. The program has educated members in their program. Most of the members are college educated, allowing for creativity when setting up trainings and member meetings. The program director challenges each member to choose a topic in which they have particular expertise, or are interested in learning more.

Last year the program had a member that majored in Political Science and wanted to become a Social Studies teacher. This particular member chose to focus her training efforts on the Citizenship component of the program. The member reviewed the documents mentioned above and tailored a few of the exercises for her portion of the training. An example of what she facilitated was the 9 Square activity found in We the People. The member had all of the other members choose things they were 1) good at, 2) liked to do, 3) not so good at, and 4) didn't like to do. From this exercise she facilitated a discussion about ways members could become active citizens to enhance the skills they had and what they liked to do. She also discussed citizenship activities that could strengthen the areas in which members did not excel, and how to enjoy them.

Supporting Data

Members are asked to fill out an evaluation on each training session throughout the year. Members ranked the untailed citizenship trainings at a 2.4 out of a 5 point scale. When the practice described above was implemented, the scores increased to 3.9.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Partnerships have not been formed at this time, but there is endless opportunity for partnerships. Members have expressed interest in learning about the civic process and how it affects education policy. The program is looking to bring in a state representative to discuss policy with current members.

Potential for Replication

Members are provided with more opportunities to be leaders when they conduct research and present their findings and/or background knowledge to the rest of their group. CARENET program staff believe this strategy helps build a sense of belonging, and provides everyone with a chance to share their passions.

Successes

The program manager noted that the members received information better when it was introduced by a peer. The citizenship piece is often not well-received by members when delivered by a program manager or professional. The peer-training tactic tends to perk the interest and attention of the members being trained, because they are more interested in what their peers have to say.

CONNECTICUT Green Crew

Focus: Environment
Issue Area: Community
Restoration

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

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Program Mission and Goals

The Knox Parks Foundation, through the Green Crew AmeriCorps program, and using horticulture as a catalyst will:

- Through the environmental work that the Green Crew accomplishes with members of the community and community leaders, a sense of civic pride and awareness will emerge among members, empowering them to become involved and engaged in their communities after their AmeriCorps terms have ended.
- Through workshops and intensive hands on training, members will develop an appreciation for the environment.
- Increase opportunities for member advancement and personal development through quality training, hands on experience and AmeriCorps education awards.

Program Description

Green Crew is a first year, 18 member, AmeriCorps*State program address critical environmental needs in Hartford, Connecticut. AmeriCorps members work alongside community volunteers restoring neighborhoods, developing community gardens, landscaping historical sites, building trails and many other environmental projects. Green Crew primarily recruits inner city youth who are faced with a variety of challenges and stresses. Secondary education is encouraged and most of the participants have graduated high school. Upon enrollment in the Green Crew, a needs assessment is done for each member, and GED training is provided when necessary. A large component of the program is member development and a strong emphasis is put on civics training. The staff at Green Crew are confident that instilling civic pride in the members will benefit the community long after their term of service is complete.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Knox Parks Foundation Green Crew is an innovative program because of the tremendous impact they have had on their members. The majority of these members are inner city youth facing many challenges. Managing the emotional needs of the members has taken up a

great deal of the staff's time. A large percentage of the members lost a person in their immediate family to a sudden illness or accident. This repeatedly impacted the morale and emotional well-being of the small, tight-knit group.

In response to this challenge, Green Crew provided opportunities for members to grow and heal through team-building, conflict resolution training, cultivating the development of a strong team and creating a supportive environment for the members. All of these efforts created a safe place for the members. Green Crew also provides a stable environment for the corps to learn skills, earn educational awards, and develop a sense of pride that comes from engaging in the good work they do.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The Green Crew is the horticultural end of a program called Hartford Blooms. In this program, the Green Crew grows approximately 20,000 annuals plants in greenhouses. When mature, these plants are transplanted into 1,000 large planters that are then placed throughout the City of Hartford. Planters are located throughout the downtown areas and in all neighborhoods of the city. The Green Crew also maintains these pots, fertilizing them and watering them for the entire growing season. This program is run in partnership with the City of Hartford and the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The Hartford Blooms Program and the Greater Hartford Green Team generate hundreds of volunteer hours per month. Hartford Blooms offers volunteers a chance to help transplant seedlings that are grown by the Green Crew members in the Knox Park Foundation's greenhouse. Most of the transplanting takes place in February and March so volunteers are treated to a taste of spring during the dead of winter. High school and middle school students from Hartford and surrounding towns also participate in the greenhouse as volunteers.

Resources are generated through the Green Crew's Horticultural Fee for Service program. The Green Crew provides area non-profit organizations with landscape maintenance services while they learn about landscaping and horticulture. These partnerships help Knox to raise the matching funds needed to run the AmeriCorps program. Lawns are mowed, trees and shrubs are pruned, and flower beds are planted and maintained while members learn valuable skills from trained, experienced supervisors.



Successes

Green Crew is having a very successful program year. They are on target for meeting their objectives, they recruited and maintained a corps of members who possess great compassion and commitment, and they have had a tremendous impact on the community. The members have been hard at work all over the city maintaining gardens, planting trees, engaging over 300 volunteers, learning new skills, and helping to improve the health and appearance of Hartford. Green Crew has started to maintain many of Hartford's landmarks, including the Ancient Burying Ground, the Old State House, and Spring Grove Cemetery. This maintenance has made an important contribution to preserving the capitol's heritage and the community's pride.

Green Crew has also initiated a new volunteer-driven city restoration effort. The Green Team is a diverse group of urban and suburban area residents who dedicate one Saturday a month to the improvement of the appearance of Hartford. This has been a very effective way to recruit volunteers, which benefits members by expanding the ways that they learn about and experience diversity. Increased volunteer involvement also serves to expand the capacity of the Crew to get things done. This team works side-by-side with the AmeriCorps members on projects such as tree plantings and the restoration of parks. In addition to accomplishing important urban projects, the Team provides a means for people from different backgrounds to meet each other, work together, and build human bridges across racial, geographic, and socio-economic boundaries.

DELAWARE

AmeriCorps State Parks Partners Program

Focus: Environment
Issue Area:
Environmental Education

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The AmeriCorps State Parks Partners Program (ASPP) is the jewel of the Delaware Commission's portfolio. It is a statewide initiative that addresses the need to provide and expand high quality recreation, environmental education, cultural and historic interpretive programming, and conservation and preservation activities through capacity building activities in Delaware State Parks. Although the Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control agency, Parks and Recreation division has long recognized the need for volunteers in state parks and had even placed volunteerism in their strategic plan, it was not until the AmeriCorps State Parks Partners program was implemented in Delaware's state parks that a quantifiable paradigm change occurred.

Program Description

Twelve full-time ASPP Volunteer Coordinators recruit, train, and supervise volunteers who actively provide park services and programming in the need areas. Additionally, the volunteer activities unite diverse communities under a shared goal, the protection and preservation of State Parks and preserves.

In addition to their Delaware State Parks AmeriCorps Early Service Training, these members receive extensive training in Volunteer Coordination and Management, covering all areas of volunteer administration including: needs assessments, recruitment, screening, interviewing, placement and assignment, recognition, group and episodic involvement, outreach techniques, risk management, and staff relations. They are enrolled in the Delaware Association of Volunteer Administration and attend trainings and activities sponsored by the organization. They also attend the Delaware Conference on Volunteerism sponsored by the State Office of Volunteerism and the Delaware Commission.

Seven full-time ASPP Educators lead and teach environmental education and interpretation, or historical and cultural programs. Students in grades K-12 and their families are a targeted population. Members provide direct service at one of seven Nature Centers or historical sites as well as conducting on-going research, design, and development of curriculum and new activities for the various programs.

In addition to their Delaware State Parks AmeriCorps Early Service Training, these members receive extensive skills training to assist them in their service and provide skills and confidence to lead educational programs as educators. Early in their service, they attend Certified Interpretive Guide training through the National Association of Interpretation. They also attend park training in Educational or Historical programming, interpretation, and customer service. Once these are completed, the members receive additional training at their service site specific to their individual assignment.

Thirty-eight ASPP Summer Program members exponentially increase the parks' ability to meet needs through direct service during the highest park use period. 14 members supplement ASPP Educators, three provide service with the Trails Crew to build and maintain trails, four members serve in natural areas resource management, and two serve in the Central Office. All members attend monthly All-Team trainings for on-going training and twice monthly Regional meetings.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Half-time and quarter-time members provide direct service to the park visitors. They are certified environmental or historical interpreters, leading visitors through the parks providing educational programs and coordinating stewardship and preservation activities. They lead canoe trips on local rivers. They greet visitors and interpret cultural and historical sites at Delaware parks, including award winning costumed interpretation in both first and third person roles. Members teach environmental education in the Park Nature Centers, and lead nature walks into the field. They also bring these lessons into the community through outreach efforts. These members are also researching and developing new educational programs.

Supporting Data

- A bilingual member at Trap Pond has translated brochures and documents into Spanish and is leading the first-ever Spanish-language Pontoon Boat Tour to meet the needs of an emerging Latino population.
- A member working at Rockford Park in Wilmington is determining the needs of urban park visitors.
- Members at the Brandywine Zoo present zoo programs to day care kids and urban summer campers, as well as family visitors. They served 900 people in their first month of service.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

- A member is developing environmental programming for the Port Penn Interpretive Center, which tells the story of a historical wetland community along the shores of the Delaware River.
- Members at the Indian River Lifesaving Station Museum are presenting Living History interpretation and education of the historic 1900s era station.
- Members are spearheading the research and development of the interpretive story of World War II soldiers stationed at Fort Miles, the World War II era coastal defense battery at Cape Henlopen State Park, which will open to the public soon.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The greatest innovation is the quantifiable shift in the perception and value of volunteers in the park system. Volunteers are now active in every facet of park operations. The full-time AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and supervise volunteers from every sector; industry work teams (from Fortune 1000 corporations) are volunteering in the parks helping to preserve and conserve wilderness areas. Volunteers help to restore historical registered buildings within parklands. Youth volunteers are planting trees and leading tours. Senior volunteers are helping provide programs in campgrounds to children.

Successes

- Members provided more than 120 different types of programs and interacted with more than 56,000 visitors.
- Overall volunteer hours in state parks have increased by 300%.
- Visits to state parks have doubled.
- Visitor satisfaction evaluations at parks are in the ninetieth percentile.
- 7+ miles of new trail have been created.
- Eradication of Kobomugi, and invasive plant assaulting the Delaware Coastline.
- Members' average rating for the program was 4.75 out of a possible 5 point maximum, with direct supervisors' average rating overall performance of the members at 4.25 out of 5 point scale.



FLORIDA

AmeriCorps Community Integration Program

Focus: Health and Public Safety

Issue Area: Mental Health

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

People with mental illnesses live and work among us. In fact, the prevalence of mental illnesses is greater than most other recognizable disorders. Those affected are frequently isolated due to fear of discovery or due to bias and discrimination that impairs their ability to integrate into the mainstream. Even with the advent of new treatments and medications, people with mental illnesses face challenges that limit their productivity and marginalize them from the “undiagnosed” population.

The AmeriCorps Community Integration Program (ACIP) is designed to address that isolation through the introduction of a “natural supports” service model. Natural supports are the kinds of resources that most of us take for granted. They include family, friends, work, faith/spiritual links and opportunities for self-directed socialization. These are the very supports that are missing from the lives of many people with long term mental illnesses. For them, life contacts are often limited to treatment settings and congregate living environments where monotony and directedness replace opportunity and choice.

Program Description

ACIP recruits and trains AmeriCorps service members in skills that facilitate the building of natural supports, including communication skills, listening, problem solving, decision making and knowledge of a broad array of community resources. ACIP members meet and engage behavioral health consumers in settings where those consumers regularly congregate. That may be at treatment sites, residential programs or in one of the community’s consumer-run drop-in centers. Through dialogue and casual interaction, ACIP members begin to build relationships based on common interests and mutual respect. Once engaged, ACIP members offer consumers assistance in identifying and setting goals for “recovery”. It is important to note that the goals are those of the consumers and will fit into their own definition of recovery. Each consumer’s plan is unique and individualized to meet his/her needs, interests and desires. The role of the ACIP member is to support the consumer, to help to motivate him/her and to assist when the individual plan faces challenges or barriers.

Each ACIP member engages at least five consumers during his/her service term. Activities range from support for social skills to preparation for work. ACIP members have been successful in helping consumers to find housing, training and traditional work. ACIP has also been recognized for its efforts to include persons with disabilities (including behavioral disabilities) as service members. Service members in our first program year found that they could safely disclose their own history of illness and use it as a motivating factor in helping others. That peer support resulted in a large number of consumers seeking ACIP positions in subsequent service terms.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

The AmeriCorps Community Integration Program (ACIP) builds upon strengths of individuals and the community to further goals of recovery. Moreover, its own successes add to the community's strengths and thereby promote more opportunities for recovery. As an example, one service member discovered a group of consumers with a common interest in music. That resulted in the formation of a band that is now performing at community settings. The confidence and self-esteem that resulted from the music program has helped band members to grow socially and expand their personal horizons in ways of their own choosing. It has enhanced their lives. That is a component of recovery.

ACIP has changed consumer attitudes from that of disability to capability. One service member who is blind motivated others to reassess their own personal competencies. In demonstrating that blindness was not a hindrance to her enjoyment and productivity, the consumers engaged by her began to view their own circumstances in a more positive and affirming light. The attitude became contagious so that others, not engaged in ACIP, also began to view their circumstances in terms of possibilities rather than limitations. That sows seeds of recovery.

Supporting Data

ACIP developed quality of life and skill assessment tools to demonstrate progress of individuals engaged by the program. Data collected confirms the value of the natural supports model as implemented by ACIP. Satisfaction surveys affirm the positive outcomes for persons served. Daily journals maintained by service members document personal growth that arises from their journey as AmeriCorps service members.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

ACIP has developed and sustained creative partnerships. Formal agreements have been secured with five consumer-run drop-in programs that serve as a home base for ACIP members who can then engage a broader number of consumers in settings that are comfortable and familiar. One asset of this arrangement is that the ACIP members are able to encourage their consumer partners to participate in activities of multiple sites, expanding their opportunities and their confidence at the same time.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Another innovative aspect of the ACIP program model is its encouragement of volunteerism on behalf of the service population. ACIP members work closely with staff of the Mental Health Association to identify areas in which they can provide additional service or encourage others to invest in service. As an example, a new "warm line" service supported by ACIP provides outreach and support to persons in the community. An annual event supported by a local church is another. These programs and systems bring people with

needs together with people knowledgeable of resources. The result is a link that frequently promotes community integration and principles of recovery.

Potential for Replication

The innovative strategies demonstrated by the Community Integration program offer great potential for replication. ACIP supports the integration of community mental health systems that exist throughout the nation. Communities that support a recovery model of services will find the ACIP program model complimentary to their goals and services.

Successes

AmeriCorps Community Integration Program (ACIP) members gain competence to facilitate communication, life skills and natural supports mentoring as a result of training provided. Members demonstrate their mastery of the natural support model and communication and life skills concepts by providing "teach back" exercises to the group. Further result of this competency is the ultimate validation of the success of the ACIP program and its acceptance and integration into the services array of our community. Based upon favorable consumer response to the program and positive AmeriCorps outcomes, the behavioral health service system (Florida Department of Children and Families – District Ten Broward County) has adopted a "Peer Bridgers" service that is grounded in ACIP principles and incorporates ACIP training modules. This demonstration project engaged ACIP graduates who used skills gained in the program to support forensics clients in advance of their discharge into the community. Its success has encouraged funders to develop and support new opportunities for peers to work as providers of services. As a result, all consumer directed programs in the County are now funded for peer positions and a new Peer Professional organization has been formed to support issues and needs of its members.

Of the fourteen second-year graduates of the ACIP program, nine were able to secure employment in fields related to their service. In addition, four other ACIP participants have been employed by host agencies. Four ACIP graduates are pursuing higher education at this writing and one graduate, a wheelchair bound person, continues to volunteer her time and services to the program.

Behavioral health consumers have gained skills and supports associated with recovery and successful integration into the mainstream community. ACIP designed "living/life skills" and "social/behavioral skills" surveys to assess the impact of the program on persons served. In pursuing benefits to persons served (behavioral health consumers) toward the goal of community integration, 93% of 184 consumers responding to surveys reported that they were involved in activities outside of the home, a 58% increase from the beginning of program participation. 72% acknowledged new friends and associates with whom they socialized, a 38% increase. 70% stated they did not need hospitalization for their illness during the service period, a 22% increase. 57% were engaged in self help support groups and 46% indicated an interest in further expanding their socialization supports, a 12% increase. Surveys of participants help to identify areas of weakness and areas in which consumers request support. Members work with consumers to design programs that meet needs/requests identified whether for a group of individuals or for one single individual with a specific, personal goal.

Within the first three months of the current services period, 14 ACIP members are serving 78 behavioral health consumers. As a result of common interest requests, five new programs have initiated in local drop-in center sites. Based on the question "Do you feel healthy?", only 30% of consumers responded favorably. Therefore a health education program was developed in response. Seventy-six percent of consumers surveyed could identify a personal goal and 63% indicated that they were trying to achieve that goal. Only

25% of consumers surveyed reported engagement in some form of work (compensated or volunteer). Skills training that include education (GED preparation) and work readiness are therefore offered. This year more personalized responses have resulted in a "survivors of sexual abuse/incest" support group and a support group for consumers who are HIV positive. These peer facilitated groups have encouraged consumers to deal with painful life issues in a positive way and to rely on one another and the abilities that they bring to the process of recovery. Seventy-six percent of consumers currently engaged in the program state that they now have friends they can count on and an equal number report that they feel safe. For persons with mental illness, this is a significant positive response.

AmeriCorps members have increased a public awareness of behavioral health issues by planning unique community wide programs which strive to educate and enhance Broward County residents and begin to eliminating the stigma associated with such illnesses. One community goal was to generate volunteer service. In the second program year, 137 community volunteers provided 556 hours of service in support of ACIP. This does not include in-kind support provided by host partner supervisors and staff.

FLORIDA

AmeriCorps Pinellas

Focus: Health and Public Safety

Issue Area: Community Safety

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

AmeriCorps Pinellas, headquartered in Clearwater, Florida, is a partnership between the St. Petersburg College (SPC) and the Clearwater Police Department (CPD). The program aims to:

- Work closely with community policing officers, crime prevention officers, and staff of local community service agencies to help prevent/reduce crime in targeted areas;
- Save valuable police officer time by assisting police units with the execution of crime prevention and other details;
- Provide assistance to law enforcement personnel with major and minor incidents, such as terrorist attacks, large fires, plane crashes, prolonged investigations, car accidents, and disabled vehicles;
- Partner with the City's Downtown Community Policing and Bike Team, the Clearwater Main Street program, and the Clearwater Chamber of Commerce in an effort to inform citizens and tourists about events, services, directions, and general information about Clearwater;
- Patrol the school grounds at the two local high schools which will lead to an increase in the feeling of safer school environments;
- Perform daily and nightly patrols of city parks and recreational trails, safety patrols of the City's beaches, as well as patrols of local Homeland Security "sensitive sites";
- Mentor struggling youth in local schools and in afterschool programs;
- Engage in community safety events providing various services such as fingerprinting for children, bicycle safety courses, and safety and crime prevention presentations to residents;
- Increase educational opportunities for the members through continuing training and AmeriCorps education awards;
- Foster citizen responsibility and support citizen participation in neighborhood watch to help meet emerging homeland security initiatives; and
- Build neighborhood unity.

Program Description

For the entire 2004 program year, the AmeriCorps Pinellas membership (comprised of eight members):

- Saved a total of 5,653 hours of valuable law

enforcement officer time, valued at \$130,019.00;

- Provided 4,280 hours of direct service to the School Resource Officers of the Clearwater and Countryside High School, and reported 74 students smoking or in possession of tobacco products, 182 students trying to skip school, 108 students for tardiness, 59 trespassers and 373 traffic and parking violations;
- Mentored 37 students, 97.3% of which showed gains in behaviors, demeanors, and attitudes characteristic of resilient children according to assessment forms completed by the teachers and site supervisor(s);
- Recruited 244 volunteers from the community who contributed 1,000 volunteer service hours and benefited 2,364 people;
- Patrolled the city of Clearwater and ten of its area parks for a total of 2,745 hours;
- Assisted with 349 accidents and provided assistance to 131 citizens with DAVs.

The AmeriCorps Pinellas Members receive training in CPR and First Aid, Citizenship, Ethics in Law Enforcement, Introduction to Community Policing, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Life After AmeriCorps, Radio Communications, Traffic Direction and Control, Traffic Homicide Investigations Trailer, Trail Patrol, Community Emergency Response Team, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Homeland Security, and Switchboard.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Many of the AmeriCorps Pinellas alumni have been hired by law enforcement agencies (e.g. Pinellas Sheriff's Office, Clearwater Police Department, St. Petersburg Police Department, and Largo Police Department). Having served in AmeriCorps Pinellas, these individuals have worked closely with community members; they have understood the meaning and the importance of volunteerism; and they serve the public while promoting volunteerism.

The program has changed member and law enforcement personnel attitudes to assume competence when they see or meet a person with a disability. An AmeriCorps Pinellas alumnus with a hearing disability is currently a sworn officer serving at the Clearwater Police Department. He did not allow his physical disability affect his productivity; with the aid of a hearing device he "got things done" and he has led other members and police officers to follow his exemplary path of patience and strong work ethic.

Supporting Data

During the past grant period, stakeholder surveys of residents, community agencies, law enforcement officers and members have consistently shown that AmeriCorps Pinellas has had a solid impact on both the communities served and its participating membership. The annual service recipient surveys taken over this period (scored on a Likert Scaling, with 5 indicating the highest rating and 1 the lowest) show high levels of satisfaction with program members and staff (average of 4.72), program accomplishments (average of 4.69), and the relevance of the program's work in addressing community needs (average of 4.69).

Also, surveys of members have shown similarly high levels of satisfaction with the experience of being an AmeriCorps Pinellas member. 95% of members agreed or strongly agreed that what they had done during their service years had made a difference and had a positive impact on the community. The same 95% of members responded that they had reached important personal and professional goals through their service with the program.

According to some of the general results of the Park Patrol Survey covering the August 2003 to November 2003 period:

- On the nine questions that were posed using a five-point Likert Scale, none of the 120 persons surveyed on the 10 parks responded with either a negative or extreme negative response.
- Almost 3 out of 4 surveyed were previously aware of the fact that the park was being patrolled by AmeriCorps members.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

AmeriCorps Pinellas has created and maintained particularly interesting and unique partnerships. The program has been and continues to be partners with: the Criminal Justice program of the St. Petersburg College; the Pinellas County School Board; the Clearwater Main Street program; the City of Clearwater Neighborhood Services department, Parks and Recreation department, and Community Response department; and the Y.W.C.A. Hispanic Outreach Center.

Cross-program Connections

AmeriCorps Pinellas is cooperating with Citizen Corps so that each year the members receive Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training provided by the Clearwater Fire Department. The CERT program under Citizen Corps helps instruct people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations.

Potential for Replication

The AmeriCorps Pinellas program demonstrates novel approaches that present great potential for replication in other counties and states. The program supports the integration of public safety programs and law enforcement agencies in an effort increase the general public's awareness on public safety and crime prevention. Communities with high crime rates and/or communities that need more information on public safety activities will find the AmeriCorps Pinellas model very beneficial and easy to replicate.

Successes

Stakeholder surveys of residents, community agencies, law enforcement officers and Members have consistently shown that AmeriCorps Pinellas has had a profound impact on both the communities served and its participating membership. For the period 2001-2003 AmeriCorps Pinellas members:

- Provided 69 safety/crime prevention presentations and workshops to 2,387 community residents, after which 96% of the attendees showed an increase in safety knowledge.
- Tutored 8 platoons of youthful offenders at the Pinellas County Boot Camp helping them raise academic achievement by an average of 1.75 grade levels.
- Helped revitalize 24 neighborhood, school and business crime watches, engaging 512 more citizens in community safety efforts than had previously been involved.
- Corrected over 2,350 code violations making roads and intersections safer.
- Helped organize 28 community events such as back-to-school celebrations and safety fairs, bringing over 12,000 neighbors together and exceeding the program goal by 122%.
- Involved over 816 volunteers who contributed 3,233 hours to their communities by cleaning neighborhoods, supporting youth programs and educating others about safety.
- Provided thousands of police mentoring hours to its Members, better preparing criminal justice students for roles as police officers in the future.

GEORGIA

Service to Families in Fannin County

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Adult and School Age education Support

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Service to Families in Fannin County
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Program Mission and Goals

AmeriCorps Service to Families is focused on a broad spectrum of education support and tutoring in Fannin County, a small rural community in the north Georgia mountains. The program seeks to help local schools, students and families whose needs are greatest by offering targeted assistance in specific areas under the common goals of raising academic performance for challenged learners and promoting the value of education among families.

Program Description

Service to Families AmeriCorps members:

- Tutor adults who have struggled with or previously dropped out of GED instruction in classroom settings, helping the students to make progress toward achieving their GED certification, or to raise their level of education, through intensive sessions in their homes;
- Tutor school-age students during afterschool hours at a family resource center to help them overcome specific learning problems or improve general study habits and attitudes toward education;
- Tutor and mentor students who need special one-on-one assistance in the public alternative school, in a psychological-education facility and at the Fannin Head Start/Pre-Kindergarten school;
- Help prepare children ages zero to three for their first school experience through a home visitation program that encourages parents to provide a safe, stimulating home environment;
- Increase volunteerism in the community and address the emergency needs of area families by staffing a food pantry that distributes donated food items; and
- Increase their knowledge of specific children-related issues and their skills in areas ranging from professionalism to tutoring methods through varied and high-quality AmeriCorps training.

The AmeriCorps Service to Families program has developed partnerships with local schools, an adult learning center, and other funders to train and field 16 AmeriCorps members in service teams, with specific emphasis on helping students or families that face obstacles to learning. Members receive intensive training in tutoring methods and practices, are certified as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, receive first aid, adult, child and infant CPR training,

learn team problem-solving techniques, and gain valuable experience in public speaking by representing the program in the community. The majority of the training is provided by experts in the various subject areas through the partnerships between the Fannin AmeriCorps program and participating local organizations.

Begun in late 2002, the Fannin AmeriCorps In-Home GED Study team of two members achieved its first GED graduate in 2003, a milestone that was followed by a second graduate in the summer of 2004. Of the 17 students enrolled in the program, 41% achieved promotion to a higher academic level. The AmeriCorps afterschool tutoring program recorded a 68% success rate for students (one grade level improvement in the tutored subject during a seven-month period as measured by standardized tests) during the 2003-2004 school year. The Fannin AmeriCorps food pantry provided emergency food boxes to 510 families during the same period and recorded food donations from 1,131 volunteers. AmeriCorps members who have participated in the Fannin program have gone on to success in college and to positions within the program's partnering agencies in the community.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Few achievements in life can exceed in lasting impact a GED certificate earned by a person who had previously tried and failed or dropped out of adult education classes altogether. For the Fannin AmeriCorps program, this sense of tremendous accomplishment has been true for both the students who have earned them and the AmeriCorps members who were their tutors. Members have also been touched, and in many cases, changed, by their ability to help families in need of emergency assistance through the food pantry. The one-on-one mentoring relationships that members form with their tutoring students over the course of a school year have also resulted in deeply rewarding experiences that go beyond improved grades.

Supporting Data

In addition to standardized test data collected by the program to measure tutoring results, the Fannin AmeriCorps program uses the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, a parent completed, child monitoring system that tracks early brain and motor skill development, to measure progress for the Home Visitation Team. Food pantry contributions and distributions are documented. AmeriCorps members must pass a test on tutoring methods and practices before being certified to tutor.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

AmeriCorps Service to Families is sponsored by the Fannin County Family Connection collaborative and is a major part of that organization's effort to improve the well-being of families and children in a region of Georgia that suffers from unacceptably high rates of teenage pregnancy, school dropouts and child abuse. Several members of the collaborative are also service partners with the AmeriCorps program, which facilitates close coordination of services and has helped to develop a network of support among different organizations, including faith-based groups.

The close coordination between AmeriCorps staff and service team partners has resulted in a program design that delivers AmeriCorps service to areas of greatest need but without duplication. An example is the AmeriCorps In-Home GED Study program, which takes the tutoring service into the homes of students who either have previously failed in a classroom environment or have other obstacles, such as lack of transportation or childcare, that prevent them from attending regular adult education classes. Another example is the

AmeriCorps afterschool tutoring program, which provides individual tutoring that the local school system cannot afford to offer. School teachers refer students to the AmeriCorps afterschool tutoring program and provide direction to AmeriCorps tutors through the parents.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The Fannin AmeriCorps Food Pantry relies solely upon contributions from volunteers to operate. AmeriCorps members promote both the food pantry and the volunteer opportunity it represents to the community through the local news media, by speaking to civic organizations and school meetings and by helping to organize food drives.

Potential for Replication

The Fannin AmeriCorps program design was created through a collaborative approach that was specifically based upon the needs of the participating local agencies. This collaborative, needs-based approach makes the Fannin program unique among other AmeriCorps programs but also easily replicated by other communities since it brings together groups with common goals.

Successes

Since its inception in 1997, AmeriCorps Service to Families has steadily improved in every measurable area of performance, including member enrollment, which has been 100% for the past two years, and member retention, which has averaged above 80%. One measure of the program's success has been the trust of the Fannin County community in two vital areas: afterschool tutoring and the food pantry. The afterschool tutoring program has grown in standing within the local community to the point that the demand for the service exceeds the capacity. Even though the schedule was changed in 2003 to accommodate more students, the program still maintains a waiting list for tutoring slots. The AmeriCorps food pantry has grown from a small operation five years ago that was able to provide very limited assistance to only a few families per month into a substantial assistance program that currently processes donations and distributions of several thousand pounds of food per month.

The primary instrument used to measure the program's tutoring outcomes is the Wide Range Achievement Test-3. Between 65 and 75% of students enrolled in the AmeriCorps afterschool tutoring program for a significant period of time show at least one grade level increase in the tutored subject. Data from the psychological education school where AmeriCorps members tutor show that, for the past two years, test scores of 65% of students have increased from very low levels to near grade level after six to nine months of one-on-one assistance from AmeriCorps members. In the alternative school where AmeriCorps members tutor middle and high school students, standardized test scores have increased for between 70 and 80% of tutored students to at or above grade level, in many cases after a single semester.

As previously mentioned, 41% of AmeriCorps In-Home GED students have advanced at least one level of the curriculum and two of the 17 students have earned their GED certificates. Significantly, many of these students previously had dropped out of adult education classes after their initial testing placed them at very low academic levels.

A final but equally important indicator of the success of the AmeriCorps Service to Families program has been the members themselves. The majority of the program's alumni have continued their education and many are now returning to the Fannin County community to embark on careers in education, social work, health and other related fields.

GEORGIA

Inner Harbour AmeriCorps

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Mental Health

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

Inner Harbour Hospitals, Ltd is a private, not for profit behavioral health care provider with multiple locations in Georgia. Inner Harbour offers a variety of programs for children and adolescents ranging in age from 6 to 18 who are experiencing emotional, behavioral, or substance abuse challenges. The majority of young people served are caught in a cycle of repeated failure within the traditional classroom, and struggle with basic academic skills. Inner Harbour AmeriCorps strives to:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring sessions to improve literacy skills as well as GED preparation for incarcerated youth over the age of 16. Many of the young people served are two or more grade levels behind their public school peer group and struggle with transitioning back into a public school environment. AmeriCorps members prepare them to enter school through one-on-one tutoring sessions in the areas of literacy, GED preparation, or other subject-based material as identified by teachers. Corps members also assist with technical school enrollment or adult GED classes where appropriate.
- Improve skill sets of young people by serving as transitional coaches as they leave the Inner Harbour program through life skills classes and identifying mentors or mentoring agencies within other community-based organizations. Currently, the members serve with Communities in Schools to assist with establishing a state-wide database that identifies mentoring agencies within each county for the state of Georgia.
- Develop a sense of community and citizenship within youth populations through the implementation of service-learning initiatives within the classroom setting. Many young people reconnect with the community and community members through engaging in an intensive service-learning project.
- Increase educational opportunities for members, including intensive trainings that focus on serving with youth at risk and experiential educational models.

Program Description

Inner Harbor AmeriCorps is uniquely positioned to engage students with emotional and behavioral challenges at Inner Harbour Hospital Ltd., an accredited residential mental health facility. After three years of service at Inner Harbour, the AmeriCorps program has met critical educational needs of the young residents and cultivated vital partnerships with local public schools and non-profit organizations through tutoring, mentoring, service-learning, and out-of-school time service.

The programmatic model provides guidance to members and strongly suggests a sequencing approach to service with the youth population. Many of the youth struggle with adult relationships due to the nature of their abusive backgrounds and issues with trust. Corps members are encouraged to spend quality time with the students they have been assigned to tutor to establish a bond of trust prior to engaging in tutoring sessions. This time might be spent playing games, talking, or completing art projects and other fun activities. Through these activities, members pick up on student interests and use that information to engage youth in reading. The older youth in particular are sensitive about reading ability levels as many of them are at or just above a 4th grade level. This one-on-one time and support the members provide the Inner Harbour youth improves the young peoples' ability to enter public school on par with their public school peers.

Members receive intensive trainings for an approximate four-week period prior to entering the classroom. Inner Harbour offers a national model of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention along with conflict resolution, client boundaries, CPR/First Aid and an Inner Harbour-specific orientation. Members also receive specific trainings on how to be an effective tutor for at-risk youth or those with emotional behavioral disorders.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

When children arrive at Inner Harbour, they are in crisis – on the brink of lifelong mental illness, suicide or sentences in youth detention centers. More than three-quarters are victims of abuse. Inner Harbour uses a strength-based approach with experiential modalities to reach and help youth recover. AmeriCorps members bring a unique perspective to the program through their dedication and commitment to service and serve not only as tutors and coaches, but as mentors and role models. For example, multiple adolescents in the program have expressed interest in joining AmeriCorps in the future and two young people did join a youth Corps after leaving Inner Harbour. As members give to the youth and community with their service ethic, they grow exponentially on a professional and personal level. More than one-third of graduating Corps members over the course of four years has stayed on at some capacity as Inner Harbour staff.

Inner Harbour AmeriCorps members serve in varying capacities with close to 1,000 children annually at two campuses. The Rockmart campus treats male juvenile offenders and adolescent sex offenders. The Douglasville campus is an intensive residential treatment program for boys and girls, manages group homes for transitioning youth, and acts as a group home for teenage prostitutes from the Atlanta area. Through service-learning initiatives, many of these youth feel a sense of ownership and a desire to give back to the communities they have taken from. Through engaging with volunteers from communities in which the members and youth serve, the program aids in dispelling the myths and stereotypes surrounding at-risk youth and fostering positive adult–youth interactions.

Supporting Data:

Inner Harbour AmeriCorps uses a variety of assessment tools to measure the impacts and outcomes of service. Through pre and post assessments on tutored young people, standardized test scores (pre and post), and satisfaction surveys completed by youth and other stakeholders, results confirm the value of service that members provide the youth and the Inner Harbour community.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The Inner Harbour campus is located on over 1,800 acres and therapeutic initiatives are grounded in experiential, activity based programming such as ropes course, wilderness experiences, horsemanship, West African drumming, and more. These programs are all used to teach trust, relationship building, conflict resolution, self-confidence, and responsibility. Corps members are actively engaged in learning and facilitating experiential methodologies. Due to the nature of the residential treatment program and the experiential therapeutic models we use to engage the youth, the partnership with Inner Harbour is truly unique.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Inner Harbour AmeriCorps forged a partnership with Yes Atlanta, a non-profit organization dedicated to serving greater Atlanta area youth through the recruitment of community volunteers to serve as mentors. Many of the youth graduating from the juvenile offender program are now partnered with a community mentor through transitional coaching established by AmeriCorps members. On an annual basis, Corps members and Yes Atlanta assist in recruiting between 40 and 80 community volunteers.

Potential for Replication

Many other residential treatment centers exist on a national level where resources are limited and needs are great.

Successes

Over the years, Inner Harbour AmeriCorps has tutored over 450 students, resulting in an increase of one or more letter grade for at least 70% of the students tutored, and gained an average of thirteen months in literacy skills as measured by standardized assessments. Teachers and other mental health professionals see the marked improvement over a short span of time (average of four months for one-on-one tutoring) as a critical intervention in the healing process of the youth served. Many youth caught in the cycle of abuse experience repeated academic failure and little to no growth in achievement or aptitude over long periods of time. The one letter grade improvement and/or the 13 month average increase in literacy skills made a difference. Many youth thanked AmeriCorps members for teaching them how to read their first chapter book.

Before the inception of Inner Harbour AmeriCorps, only two students in the four previous years completed their GED. Since then, of the 55 students tutored in GED preparation, 20 completed the test, 12 passed, and six passed four out of five sections. Other youth interested in GED preparation are assisted in enrolling in adult education classes after leaving Inner Harbour. Three students have enrolled in technical college after receiving GED tutoring, support in taking the test, and AmeriCorps assistance with the application process.

IDAHO

Lewis-Clark Service Corps

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Literacy

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The mission of the Lewis-Clark Service Corps (LC Service Corps) is to help improve school success for “at-risk” Idaho students, assist teachers, students and their families plan for a successful future.

Program Description

The following are indicators of great need for literacy services in Idaho: low reading scores, disproportionate high school dropout rates, and high concentrations of disadvantaged and minority students in certain counties. In Idaho, decreased state educational funding, struggling economies throughout the state, and the increased need to have community and faith-based organizations fill in gaps for at-risk students in the education system, are additional indicators of the huge need to help develop the capacities of schools and community groups.

The LC Service program directly addresses these needs by providing tutors, mentors, and career counselors to Idaho students at elementary schools, middle and senior high schools, colleges and universities, GED centers, homeless shelters and family education programs in the following activities:

- Tutor under-achieving K-3 students in reading literacy;
- Tutor under-achieving pre-school to adult learners in all academic subjects;
- Mentor discouraged or ill-prepared students;
- Assist teachers by coordinating literacy programs and afterschool tutoring centers;
- Recruit, train and manage community volunteer tutors/mentors to help develop the capacity of schools, community and faith-based organizations.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Personal and professional success is enjoyed by LC Service Corps alumni. Skills learned from training and direct service are easily translated into their “life after AmeriCorps”. An example of community impact is that according to the Idaho State Department of Education, improved reading skills can directly impact the reduction of delinquency and incarceration rates.

Supporting Data

Outcomes are measured through the use of existing measurement tools: pre and post standardized tests, final grade reports, teacher/student evaluations, and student self-evaluation and feedback. This data is provided to LC Service Corps staff from host site supervisors through required quarterly progress reports.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

In addition to the fiscal and facilities partnerships with LCSC and the BISD, the program has built partnerships with host site representatives and supervisors throughout the state of Idaho.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Members recruit community volunteers to serve in two ways:

- Through direct service as tutors/mentors
- Participation in community service projects designed and implemented by members

Members reach out within their own communities to either directly secure project resources or secure a network of individuals who have access to project resources.

Potential for Replication

The unique and innovative infrastructure, data capturing, and program management systems designed and utilized by the Lewis-Clark Service Corps could be easily replicated in communities and/or state programs with similar goals and objectives.

Successes

Competition to become a LC Service Corps site has become intense due to the program's solid reputation. Each year, there are many more host site applications than the program has capacity to provide placement.

Systems are in place to measure and evaluate members direct service activities. Tools used include:

- LC Service Corps designed progress reports to provide detailed information toward stated performance measurements including member successes and challenges. From members/site supervisor reports, data is available that illustrate the impact members are having on those tutored/mentored.
- Supervisor evaluations of individual member performance.
- Semi-monthly member activity service log summaries that capture member activities and service hours, highs/lows of their service, supervisor comments, and required member and supervisor signatures to verify member hours. These documents are also reviewed and initialed by two LC Service Corps staff.
- Monthly member team meeting reports monitoring member challenges and accomplishments.
- Student, teacher, and member program evaluations to obtain feedback regarding sites and the LC Service Corps program.

Evaluation/report data is entered into WBRs and paper forms filed in member files. Data is also entered into a program database for monitoring, reporting and analysis. As data is

gathered during the review of internal monitoring tools, program staff assesses training needs and whether assistance is required by members and/or host site supervisors.

The LC Service Corps has developed a relationship with the graduate department of a local state university and is currently negotiating for design and implementation of an external, long-term program impact evaluation.

1994 – 2004 Lewis-Clark Service Corps Accomplishments:

In the first ten years of this Idaho program, 351 Lewis-Clark Service Corps AmeriCorps members have:

- Tutored 37,841 students, 26,696 of whom have shown academic improvement;
- Provided career advising to 11,203 students;
- Assisted 1,025 students in receiving their GED;
- Recruited 3,743 volunteers to provide ongoing tutoring and mentoring in communities where members serve.

2004-2005 Program Year Accomplishments:

During the September – November 2004 period, Lewis-Clark Service Corps AmeriCorps members throughout Idaho provided the following:

- 75 members tutored 7,617 at-risk elementary school students through adult learners. Host sites reported 44% of these multi-age students demonstrated academic improvement. The breakdown of academic improvement by age group is as follows:
 - Pre-school: 43 of 78 (55%)
 - K-3: 1255 of 2807 (45%)
 - 4-12: 1003 of 2151 (47%)
 - Adults: 1053 of 2581 (41%)
- 44 members mentored 4661 at-risk youth, adults and their family members. Host sites reported 29% of these at-risk individuals showed improved attendance and greater willingness to remain in school.
- 58 members recruited 306 volunteers to provide ongoing tutoring and mentoring in communities where members serve.

ILLINOIS

PCC Community Wellness Center

Focus: Health and Public Safety

Issue Area: Community Health

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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PCC's Westside AmeriCorps Program

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Program Mission and Goals

The Westside AmeriCorps Program is based at PCC Community Wellness Center (PCC), a community health center that provides health and social services to five underserved communities on the west side of Chicago. PCC's Westside AmeriCorps Program strives to:

- Ensure high risk postpartum women and their infants receive recommended health care;
- Provide education and outreach through home visits, clinic visits, and group classes to individuals identified as diabetic or at risk for developing diabetes;
- Ensure individuals without a medical home and in need of health care services get linked with a primary care provider;
- Provide home education to parents of children with elevated lead levels to facilitate their compliance with the physicians' prescribed plan of care;
- Promote an ethic of service in the communities served by recruiting volunteers to assist with the development and implementation of three national service projects annually;
- Increase community volunteerism by coordinating a pediatric literacy program, Reach Out and Read, at each of PCC's three family health centers.

Program Description

The communities served are in great need of services. The Chicago Department of Public Health reports that several of these communities' health indicators rank in the top ten as compared with all Chicago communities for high infant mortality, lack of prenatal care, teen mothers, children with elevated lead levels, diabetes mortality, and chronic lower respiratory disease mortality. Through intensive outreach and educational intervention, AmeriCorps members assist individuals and families at high-risk for poor health and social outcomes, in gaining access not only to needed health care and social services, but education and life skills training.

Members serve on one of three teams (Maternal and Child Health, Healthy Lifestyles, Family Support) and receive intensive training from program staff as well as advanced practice nurses and physicians in the area of focus.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

PCC's Westside AmeriCorps program is committed to strengthening its community by empowering families to become more active in the determination of their own health care and of their futures. Facilitating members' development and deeper understanding of the issues and concerns related to a career in health care and social services remains a primary focus of the program. Three *unique* target populations are served: the Maternal-Child Health Team reaches out to high-risk new moms and babies, the Healthy Lifestyles Team assists other individuals with diabetes or at risk for developing diabetes, and the Family Support Team assists children at risk for poor health and social outcomes and their families.

In addition to the impact on community members, this program also has an extraordinary impact on the AmeriCorps members involved. AmeriCorps members are provided with clear insight and an understanding of the social services field, and especially of the issues facing the underserved. By participating in this program, members increase their knowledge of health education and increase their skills in communication, problem-solving, citizenship, team building, and leadership. By the end of their service commitment, members are prepared to begin executing career and educational plans based on career exploration, job shadowing, health and social service career services, and self-assessment of personal goals. In addition, members show increased skills in the areas of project planning and leadership, as a result of serving as Corps Captain for one month of the program year.

To further strengthen the community by understanding and serving the most urgent and ongoing needs, the program designs service projects and activities that not only include community input, but also community participation. The program recruits a "community ambassador", typically a second year AmeriCorps member, to facilitate the development of community partnerships and collaborative efforts. This particular member serves as a liaison to both individuals in need and organizations looking to connect their client to a continuum of services. Building awareness and collaboration is essential to providing the most effective services for this community.

Supporting Data

Impact on patients is documented within medical records and other medical databases. Impact on members is documented via biweekly logs, short-term goal statements, and implementation of career action plans completed during members' year of service.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

In addition to highly productive partnerships between the program, the community and the partnering hospital, it is important to note an existing collaboration with the American Red Cross. Based on their AmeriCorps outreach service, members of PCC's program are trained and certified as "American Red Cross Family Support Workers." This designation allows the AmeriCorps team to respond to local and national disasters that occur.

Potential for Replication

As a community health center, PCC faces challenges similar to those of other community health centers nationwide. Outreach and education is critical to improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities. PCC's AmeriCorps members have served as the necessary bridge enabling individuals to improve their overall health and wellness.

Successes

PCC Community Wellness Center has coordinated a highly effective AmeriCorps program since 1997. Based on information from multiple sources, such as pre and post surveys, evaluations, and program reporting, the last *three* years of service operations for PCC's Westside AmeriCorps program indicate the following:

- AmeriCorps members have provided outreach to over 1,300 women and infants. As a result of the program objectives and services, approximately 76% of women have received recommended post-partum care, and 81% of infants have received recommended well-child care to include immunizations.
- The program has provided intensive outreach to over 200 high-risk individuals and linked at least 65% to a primary care provider. In addition, over 1,000 referrals were given to individuals, of which 53% were successful.
- Over 450 families received health education and outreach by way of collaborating with the program's AmeriCorps members. Approximately 89% followed through with a plan of intervention based on this outreach activity.
- The program's members have recruited 95 community residents to serve as volunteer readers in PCC's waiting rooms. In addition, over 500 community residents have coordinated over 25 service projects benefiting community organizations.

INDIANA

AmeriCorps Peacemakers

Focus: Public Safety
Issue Area: Conflict Resolution

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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AmeriCorps Peacemakers

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Program Mission and Goals

Peace Learning Center (PLC) promotes a culture of peace through education to youth and communities; the program's vision is a community of peace where respect is primary and justice is real.

Peace Learning Center values:

- Peaceful management of all conflicts
- Strength of diversity in our community
- The potential of youth, and
- Responsible stewardship of environmental and community resources.

The goals of the program are:

- To establish a safe and common way to deal with conflicts;
- To reduce violence and encourage kindness, enhancing the school's learning atmosphere;
- To build opportunities for peacemaking through volunteer service.

Program Description

At Peace Learning Center (PLC), a direct service organization, youth spend quality time with caring and passionate adults through the AmeriCorps program. Thirty-five staff and hundreds of volunteers serve as facilitators, camp counselors, mentors, mediators, and friends.

Working with large numbers of youth and families who are the most susceptible to violence helps the whole community and lays a foundation for long-term community change. Consistent messages and modeling of healthy conflict resolution skills by adults who work with youth gives everyone established safe and fair ways to deal with conflicts and disagreements. Instilling character values that promote cooperation, service, and peacemaking builds a culture of peace.

Public events such as the Celebration of Peace that hosts over 1,600 school peacemakers, a Martin Luther King Day Event, plus workshops for parents and school staff, helps share the program's message with the larger Indianapolis community.

Many business, foundation, and government leaders realize the educational system needs serious attention, but lack faith in traditional structures to deal with

change. PLC is an independent non-profit positioned to direct services in peace education that improve environments in which we live. Working through schools allows Peace Learning Center to reach youth where they are at rather than duplicating transportation, space, and staffing.

Peace Learning Center (PLC) is a community organization with a solid record of impact and growth. Established in 1997, the center is located inside Eagle Creek Park - America's fourth largest city park.

From the beginning AmeriCorps helped to found the organization. Starting with seven members, the program now hosts 25 full-time and 4 part-time members.

PLC's conflict management and character education programs reach every Indianapolis Public Schools' (IPS) 4th and 6th grade class as well as parochial and township students, summer camps, faith-based communities, domestic violence shelters, and juvenile detention facilities - over 8,000 Indianapolis youth and adults who work with the members each year.

26 schools each year benefit from Heading Toward Harmony and Training Services that establish peer mediation, Peace Clubs, and conflict management curriculum impacting over 8,000 Indianapolis youth. Over the course of the program, over 60,000 young people, teachers, and parents participated in PLC programs with 6.5 million dollars generated to directly impact violence in the community.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Over 190 AmeriCorps members have participated in Peace Learning Center program since its inception. Members receive a four week training and orientation plus bi-weekly full-day enrichments that provide useful workshops on personal and professional development.

Engaging AmeriCorps members in direct service has led many to become teachers, social workers, youth workers, physicians, lawyers and community leaders. This helps the state of Indiana reverse the brain drain of talented young people.

Supporting Data

Completed evaluations of Peace Education and the Peace Camp showed that over 88% of participants learned at least three new ways to peacefully resolve their conflicts. School suspensions and expulsions decreased by 68% in 12 Heading Toward Harmony schools. In a survey of parents and guardians of youth participating in Peace Camp at least six weeks after their visit, over 40% of respondents noticed a positive change in their child's behavior and ability to deal with conflict.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The Peace Learning Center has an extensive partnership with the City of Indianapolis. The idea for the center was proposed in January 1997. The former J.K Lilly, Jr. property was abandoned after serving as the Native American History Museum before the collection was moved to the Eiteljorg Museum in 1986. After signing a two-year public-private partnership lease with the city of Indianapolis, staff and volunteers renovated the building completing over \$200,000 in repairs in exchange for rent, utilities, maintenance and phones. The first bus of IPS 4th graders arrived for programming on October 5, 1997. The goal of reaching every IPS 4th grade class (3,200 students) was achieved in the first year.

Because of a proven record of accomplishment, Eagle Creek Park adopted PLC into its Master Plan as a full partner in the campus. As part of a plan to build a new Earth Discovery Center that will replace the current Nature Center, PLC will expand its current space by adding more training and resource areas. The city's contribution equals at least \$175,000 for operations.

PLC has also partnered with the Indianapolis public school system. Helping kids who need help the most is the reason PLC made a commitment to Indianapolis public schools. The system has been wrecked by the constant flight of families out of the district. Going from 126,000 students in 1966 to 40,300 today left the system struggling to survive. Indianapolis Public Schools provides the program with \$250,000 in direct cash support, plus transportation and food.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Peace Learning Center garnered over \$5,500,000 to fund operations from a wide variety of community resources including the Efroymsen Fund, Indianapolis Foundation, Indianapolis Public Schools, City of Indianapolis, Clarian, Indiana Children's Trust Fund, Lilly Endowment, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Christel DeHaan Family Foundation, Hoover Foundation, Indianapolis Colts, Indiana Pacers, Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis, and Gemmer Family Foundation.

Potential for Replication

Dr. Howard Richards, Dean of Peace Studies at Earlham College has studied peace education programs internationally and believes Peace Learning Center is a unique model that should be replicated nationally. After interviewing staff and AmeriCorps members, he deduced that PLC staff are the "Henry Fords of Peace Education."

A team from Milwaukee spent three weeks researching our programs, training, and infrastructure to begin a Peace Learning Center in their Wisconsin city. Using our model and curriculum, their program is now underway as a partnership between a Quaker Meeting House, YMCA, and their local public schools. 600 youth have been served so far in its second year of operation.

Successes

Peace Learning Center makes great strides establishing itself as a community resource for peace and character education in Indianapolis. Through partnerships and collaboration, Peace Learning Center has accomplished many activities:

- Provided intensive conflict resolution and character education to over 36,000 4th and 5th Graders in the Indianapolis Public Schools and other students at Eagle Creek Park through Peace Education.
- Instituted Peace Learning Camp for 6,400 6th Grade participants – a three-day, two-night experience to learn how to peacefully deal with conflict and explore the natural environment.
- Taught conflict resolution skills to over 5,000 young people from domestic violence shelters, summer camps, community centers, and afterschool programs including work at Indiana Boys' School and Indiana Girls' School.
- Established 35 school-based peer mediation programs, forming mentoring programs, Peace Clubs, and building strong community school partnerships.
- Recruited, trained and employed over 2,750 community volunteers including church groups, first-time juvenile offenders, parents, and K-12 and college students. Volunteers mentor, serve as peer mediators, teach peace, and help with renovations.

IOWA

Rural Education and Community Help

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Domestic Violence Prevention/ Assistance

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) currently operates the REACH (Rural Education and Community Help) AmeriCorps program. The mission of this twenty- member program is to provide assistance to battered women and children in rural Iowa and in minority communities where services for victims of domestic violence are minimal or non-existent.

Focusing in the national priority area of unmet human needs, the REACH project has helped expand and enhance victim services and prevention efforts across the state. Trained and certified as victim advocates, AmeriCorps members have worked in numerous outreach offices providing counseling, referral services, crisis intervention, and legal advocacy. Additionally, REACH members provide programs in the schools on topics such as conflict resolution, sexual harassment, diversity, and dating violence.

Program Description

The REACH Program works to:

- Identify and organize community leaders and volunteers to create local services for victims of domestic violence;
- Develop a community-coordinated response to domestic violence through training and education of law enforcement, human service agencies and other professionals;
- Ensure program sustainability by recruiting and training local volunteer advocates;
- Provide direct services such as counseling, support groups, crisis line work and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

The centerpiece of the AmeriCorps ethic, "getting things done," is also the centerpiece of REACH's sustainability plan. By meeting the key aspect of the service ethic, *strengthening communities*, the program is also able to provide program endurance. With the support of local communities AmeriCorps members have opened outreach offices and new programs that will remain in the community long after AmeriCorps members are gone.

In addition to work in rural communities, REACH members are doing aggressive outreach to the growing population of immigrant battered women. Building on the model of success that worked with rural women,

members have applied that knowledge to working with underserved immigrant women. REACH members have started culturally specific programs for Hispanic women, Asian women, and refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

REACH has adopted the National Crime Prevention Council slogan "*We're not just stopping something, we're starting something.*" This program is unique because it is not merely sending members to a host site to help battered women, but rather opening new outreach centers and in some cases, starting entirely new non-profit agencies. Self-sustaining programs that remain in the community long after the AmeriCorps members' term of service is the result of a tested outreach plan.

AmeriCorps members begin their year by introducing themselves to community members, law enforcement and other human service agencies. They seek out opportunities to provide educational programs in the community and they use those opportunities to recruit potential board members and volunteers. Once a core group of individuals is identified, the ICADV staff provides technical assistance in the form of long-range planning, board development, volunteer training, and other assistance as needed. Members also acquaint new boards with the major streams of funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in Iowa. The new board members begin the task of writing by-laws, applying for non-profit status and recruiting additional volunteers. At the sites where the outreach office will remain under another program, an advisory board is created in that county with many of the same responsibilities as a board.

While board development takes place, the AmeriCorps members are busy providing direct services to victims of domestic violence. The members continue to provide educational programs which strengthen both the program and the community. As more community members learn effective means of intervention, there is a greater possibility that a victim engaging in help-seeking behaviors will actually find the assistance she needs. Every educational program is designed with the assumption that there are two individuals in the audience that will be changed forever. One of them might be a victim who saw herself in the material presented and the other is a potential volunteer who can no longer ignore the violence in her own community.

Potential for Replication

By the end of the first year community buy-in is usually firmly established. Program sustainability is a natural outgrowth of the previous year's work. Offices, phone lines, and printing are often donated by local businesses; city and county governments allocate funding for victim assistance programs. Churches might hold fundraisers and often provide a meeting space for support groups to meet. In the early part of the second year most new programs receive their first grant money.

Initially most grant money raised goes to office equipment, victim assistance funds and other start up costs. In subsequent years the money will go to hire full-time staff. After a new program is adequately staffed by non-AmeriCorps personnel, a period of approximately two or three years, the member slot is moved to a new site. In addition to opening sixteen new outreach offices, AmeriCorps members have started four new non-profits.

Successes

In 1993, ICADV completed a needs assessment of services for victims of domestic violence. Only one-third of the state's counties had 24-hour services available at the time. Now only four of the ninety-nine counties in Iowa are without specific services in their county. Not all of that expansion can be attributed directly to AmeriCorps, but the REACH program allowed ICADV to plan its growth by targeting specific regions of the state and underserved communities.

REACH members make more than 5,000 victim contacts annually; in 2003 they made 5,566. They also attended 258 legal proceedings with battered women and helped battered immigrant women file 55 VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) petitions.

The most recent REACH program evaluation concluded that in the six year period from FY 1995/1996 to FY 2001/2002 the members worked with over 2,900 volunteers who served over 45,000 volunteer hours. During the same time period REACH members provided 2,194 educational programs. The biggest piece of evidence reflecting the successful of REACH is a map of victim services in Iowa reflecting services prior to AmeriCorps and those available today.

KANSAS GoZones!

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Out of School Time/ Education Resources

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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GoZones!

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Program Mission and Goals

The goals of GoZones! are:

- To provide safe places during non-school hours for youth in targeted neighborhoods;
- To train and empower AmeriCorps members with youth and family focused skills, a sense of national identity, accomplishment and pride; and
- To strengthen the community by bringing neighbors together to positively affect youth and families, and improve the sense of community in neighborhoods.

Program Description

The GoZones! program was created in 2002 to meet local family and neighborhood needs. GoZones! fills this gap in service by providing supervised activities, free of cost to participants, to low-income, at-risk neighborhood youth. In addition to afterschool activities for youth, the GoZones! sites serve as a source of education, resources and strengthening for stressed parents and family members, as well as community building for the entire neighborhood. The GoZones! program, administered by InterFaith Ministries, is a collaborative effort by congregations, schools, social service providers, neighborhood organizations, and community policing throughout the city of Wichita.

Innovation

Potential for Replication/ Lasting Impact

The GoZones! program design includes a five year sustainability plan. Each site is on schedule to reduce and eventually eliminate reliance on federal funding through volunteer recruitment, management, and training as well as local capacity building efforts.

Supporting Data

GoZones! AmeriCorps members and volunteers serve over 200 students annually with tutoring assistance, and over 500 unduplicated youth in afterschool activities.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The GoZones! program is a model for faith-based, faith-led collaboration and exemplifies the role of faith-based

organizations in community building efforts. Local congregations have formed partnerships with schools, local businesses, residents and area national service programs to support this program and provide on-going support for community strengthening activities such as block parties and regularly scheduled community service projects.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The GoZones! AmeriCorps members recruit, train and retain over 80 volunteer tutors each year. In addition, over 500 volunteers are recruited annually to serve in afterschool programs and community service projects.

Successes

Since the program's inception in 2002, GoZones! has expanded from three to nine neighborhoods while significantly decreasing the federal cost per member share of program costs. Local resources, including volunteers, facilities and cash donations from neighborhood congregations have increased by more than 100% over the two years of this program's operation. Recently, InterFaith Ministries has expanded capacity building efforts to include solicited support from "sister congregations" throughout Kansas.

GoZones! is on target with its five-year plan toward sustainability. 437 volunteers (116 youth and 321 adults) have been recruited during the first four months of the 2003-04 program year, exceeding the goal by almost 50%. Of these volunteers, 59 adults are serving as tutors; 181 youth and adults serve in afterschool, including recreational programs, and 197 have participated in a total of 30 local projects including Make a Difference Day and the MLK Day of service where they served alongside Senior Corps and other AmeriCorps participants.

The program has consistently met or exceeded goals of providing tutoring and recreational activities to students in the neighborhoods served. Friday night recreational activities have been split into two age groups due to their overwhelming success and the program's popularity with those students who would most likely be unsupervised during that time.



An evaluation of this program conducted during its first full year of operation concluded that the program was too new to yield significant statistical results, but offered several recommendations for improvement. In response, GoZones! established an intimate and very cooperative relationship with the Wichita Public School district, delivering services at several school sites, and increased efforts to build awareness of the overall program design and goals among the community at large through churches, neighborhood councils and "town hall" style meetings.

KENTUCKY

Senior Connections

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Senior Citizens Issues

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

“Senior Connections” AmeriCorps members seek to improve the quality of life for at-risk low-income elderly by providing in-home assistance in the areas of chores, home repair, home management, caregiver relief and home safety education. Members initiate, implement and participate in senior-centered activities, are trained in disaster response, and assist in local community projects.

Program Description

“Senior Connection” AmeriCorps members:

- serve a minimum of 850 low-income, at-risk elderly resulting in their ability to remain independent;
- conduct a minimum of 100 home safety assessments resulting in a safer environment for the senior to reside in;
- receive training in core competencies including communication skills, leadership skills, conflict negotiation/resolution, civic engagement/responsibility, and CPR/First Aid/CERT;
- participate in senior center activities and services that are available to seniors thus in turn increasing senior participation; and
- recruit and manage 400 volunteers (2000 hours of service) to expand services within the senior community.

As needs within the senior community are recognized, the program has always stepped forward to assist in any way possible. As a result, since the original implementation of the program in 1997, the program has expanded and refined its services.

Examples of this adaptation include assuming responsibility for the expansion of the State Health Insurance Program by having members able to address client’s needs within their own home, and becoming Certified Emergency Responders.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Each year this program serves 250-300 at-risk seniors who are in danger of nursing home placement without the intervention of the AmeriCorps members. Additionally, as needs in the community are recognized,

the program has responded to address those needs as deemed appropriate, such as participating in the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, the Senior Olympics, and Repair Affairs.

Supporting Data

- Service sites document seniors served; satisfaction surveys verify positive outcomes of service provided; aging case managers affirm that service has been provided.
- Data on the impact of this program is also part of the Area Agency on Aging reports to the State Division of Aging.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Partnerships for this program include: seven Senior Centers, American Red Cross, State Health Insurance Assistance program, Caregiver Program, Kentucky Housing Corporation, and Hospice.

Cross-program Connections

The Senior Connections program has assisted in training and responding with members of the Senior Service Corps (FGP, SCP and RSVP) to local natural disasters (two tornadoes and several floods). The Disaster Relief Corps, the combined corps of these four programs, was recognized with an Innovative Award by the National Association of Developmental Councils.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Each year the program has increased its generation both short- and long-term volunteers. Over the past five years, 2,788 volunteers have been recruited providing 20,718 hours of service to the senior community. Additionally, the program has developed new partnerships within those agencies serving the elderly of the area, such as the District Health Department and HUD Housing.

Potential for Replication

The program has been replicated in part by another program operating in the state, and two other Area Agencies on Aging are considering replicating components of this program.

Successes

This program has been recognized both nationally and locally, receiving the following awards:

- Award for Excellence by the National Association of Regional Councils
- Innovative Award from the National Association of Developmental Councils
- Outstanding Service Award from the Southeast Cluster of Area Agencies on Aging
- Daily Point of Light Award
- Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service
- Outstanding Service Award from the Kentucky Housing Corporation

The Home Safety Assessment developed by this program has been published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service as a resource model.

The impact of this program outweighs all of the above awards in the number of seniors who have been able to stay within their own homes especially as one year in a nursing home costs an average of \$48,000. Since the inception of this program seven years ago, over 1,000 seniors have been served. More than half of each year's AmeriCorps members return to serve a second term. Many of the members within in this corps are older but see it as a way to continue to give back to their community.

LOUISIANA ShrevCorps

Focus: Environment
Issue Area: Community
Environment/ Member
Development

Innovative Elements

- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

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Program Mission and Goals

ShrevCORPS is a team-based life experience and service-learning opportunity for young adults ages 17-24. The program is committed to building an ethic of service among young adults from diverse backgrounds, to forming a corps of informed, active young adults trained and committed to addressing local environmental and community concerns, and to providing these young adults with the motivation and financial resources to pursue further education.

Program Description

ShrevCORPS is an AmeriCorps National Service Program administered by Shreveport Green and supported by the Corporation of National Service, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Louisiana Serve Commission, the Caddo Parish Commission, the City of Shreveport, the Charles T. Beaird Foundation, and Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI).

Members serve in teams to develop skills and enhance the service experience. Service projects include paint recycling, Christmas tree recycling, water quality monitoring, storm drain stenciling, planting trees, assisting the elderly with minor home repairs, yard maintenance, educating residents on environmental issues, constructing handicapped accessible walking trails, and other park improvements.

ShrevCORPS is a two-time national award winning program and has been recognized by President Clinton, Lt. Governor Blanco, and Louisiana Senators Breaux and Landrieu for outstanding accomplishments. ShrevCORPS was one of the first recipients of the Corporation for National and Community Service continuation grants (a three year renewal grant).

Innovation

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

ShrevCORPS began in 1993 with state funding from the Lt. Governor's office. Partnerships for the first year were limited. As time progressed ShrevCORPS reached out and expanded its partnership base. The key to partnership growth and expansion has been its alignment with the service opportunities. For example, a local building and supply retailer over-ordered their

planting bulbs. As a result they had an extensive amount left over and a desire to donate them for the benefit of the City and a tax credit. The retailer approached the City who then turned the project over to ShrevCORPS because they were unable to deal with the volume of bulbs. A multitude of challenges arose including transportation, cold storage and disbursement. The local Diesel Driving Training academy volunteered to pick up the bulbs and transport them. A major fish market provided cold storage. Through an established network of school and neighbor partnerships the bulbs were disbursed and planted, resulting in the community blooming with color.

ShrevCORPS partnerships are widespread and creative. The program staff is methodical about acknowledging partners and thanking them on a regular basis, noting that partnering increases ShrevCORPS' effectiveness. As networking is the key to building partnerships, members often speak at and participate in community and club events.

Cross-program Connections

The ShrevCORPS program is dedicated to cross-stream collaborations as evidence by its service partners: Learn and Serve America, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, local AmeriCorps*VISTA members, Extra Mile Youth Corps, Volunteers for Youth Justice, and other AmeriCorps programs and local scouting groups. ShrevCORPS facilitated a service project for the 2004 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service at a local middle school. The project involved beautification of the school, litter abatement in the community surrounding the school and installation of smoke detectors in the homes of students that did not have one. Retired Senior Volunteer Program members, CEE Corps (an AmeriCorps Program from West Monroe, LA), and local scouting groups all participated in this community/school event.

On May 15, 2004, ShrevCORPS facilitated a cleanup of the Red River, the source of drinking water for citizens of the City of Bossier. The cleanup brought together volunteers from Learn & Serve AmeriCorps, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, various youth centers, the Shreveport Job Corps and various community groups.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

ShrevCORPS members actively recruit parents, siblings and friends to partner with them on major projects and volunteer service days such as National Youth Service Day, Martin Luther King Jr. day of service, National Volunteer Week, Arbor Day, Earth Day, and National Water Monitoring Day.



On February 21, 2004 ShrevCORPS members facilitated the 3rd phase of a reforestation project at Cypress Black Bayou Recreation area. This was the final planting in the reforestation area devastated by the April 1999 tornado that ripped through the Benton Area. Over 75 volunteers from various area organizations turned out to help get the job done. Youth from Bossier High ROTC, Benton High ROTC, Cypress 4H Nature Club, Broadmoor Middle School, AmeriCorps volunteers, Bossier Clean City, Centerpoint

Energy, and other local groups worked together to plant over 3,200 trees. The three-year project has been a great success with about a 70% survival rate from previous plantings. Through volunteers like these the forest is on its way back to good health.

Successes

As evidenced through site visits and contact with partners this program meets and surpasses expected outcomes. The following is a list of accomplishments for ShrevCORPS:

- 271 members have completed the program and served a total of 149,861 hours.
- Members have received \$26,072 in education awards.
- Built and sustained a partner base of over 50 community-based organizations who have contributed \$1,073,652 in cash and in-kind goods to sustain the program.
- Improved quality of living for 1,241 senior citizens through weatherization painting, yard maintenance and minor repairs.
- Increased safety and awareness of 625 neighborhood residents by installing free smoke detectors.
- Increased neighborhood pride and safety, community awareness, reduced litter 75% and removed 216 tons of litter and debris through neighborhood, waterway, and illegal dump site clean-ups.
- Increased environmental knowledge among 9,921 youth through classroom and community presentations and by facilitating a free summer Earth Camp.
- Recruited 4,470 volunteers who have contributed 17,022 hours of service.
- Increased access to public parks and enhanced public lands through construction of 83 miles of walking, hiking, and biking trails, construction of 29 camping sites, seven playground units and restoration of 17 neighborhood, parish and national parks.
- Increased beauty and value of public lands by planting 16,608 trees on public property and constructing and maintaining a Regional Growing Out Station designed to provide over 8,000 free trees annually to community organizations for public planting.
- Improved the esthetic value of public property through the removal of graffiti and design and painting of a 44,000 square foot mural at Wallace Lake Dam.
- Provided tutoring in reading and language arts to 195 children in grades 1-4 who were at risk of failure.
- Recycling of 501 tons of telephone books thus reducing landfill usage and diverting the paper for reuse.
- Stenciled 489 storm drains as part of a campaign against non-point source pollution.
- Consistently groomed 19 city intersections as part of the C.A.R.E. program.
- Reduced environmental hazards by collecting 644 gallons of latex paint for recycling.
- 271 ShrevCORPS members have participated in enrichment activities led by qualified professionals such as First Aid and CPR Training, conflict resolution, aid awareness, team building, effective communication, leadership training, resume preparation, financial management and stress management.

ShrevCORPS' program budget is a great measurement of its growth; in 2003-2004 only \$90,195.00 of a total \$313,407.86 was provided by the Corporation. Some of ShrevCORPS over 100 active partners sponsor a team to provide funding for specific events.

MARYLAND

Civic Works Service Corps

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Community Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

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Program Mission and Goals

Civic Works' objectives include:

- To instill an ethic of productive citizenship and foster key life skills in young people.
- To increase the academic attainment of low-achieving students through enrichment activities.
- To convert vacant lots into parks and gardens, and to involve communities in the design, implementation and ongoing maintenance of vacant lot improvements.
- To rehabilitate homes for low-income families.
- To provide emergency preparedness information to the citizens of Baltimore.
- To teach corps members skills that prepare them for careers and college.
- To engage hundreds of volunteers in service projects each year.

Program Description

Civic Works, Baltimore's non-profit service corps, has its origins in the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Peace Corps. Founded in 1993, Civic Works provides critical community services throughout Baltimore. Each year hundreds of volunteers and corps members (mostly young adults) join Civic Works to rehabilitate homes for low-income families, transform vacant lots into parks and gardens, assist students and provide emergency preparedness information to the public. Civic Works fosters individual growth and development in its corps members through team-based service projects and weekly academic enrichment. Civic Works is an opportunity for young adults to affect positive change in the community and in their own lives.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Civic Works fields a number of teams that reduce urban blight by cleaning, greening, and beautifying vacant lots. The teams offer a wide range of services, from clearing bulk trash to making landscape improvements to creating parks and gardens. Each year, Civic Works teams reclaim more than 250 vacant lots throughout Baltimore.

The impact of Civic Works' projects is more than physical. Community members receive a psychological boost and begin to take pride in their neighborhoods. Civic Works' members and projects inspire residents to make improvements to their own properties and maintain beautified spaces.

Supporting Data: See "Successes" section.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Each year, Civic Works partners with more than 40 local and federal government agencies, community groups, corporations, and faith-based organizations. Civic Works involves community partners in every phase of rejuvenating vacant lots and communities, from initial site identification, design, planning and implementation to ongoing maintenance. Civic Works' corps members recruit volunteers from community groups and surrounding neighborhoods to convert abandoned lots into parks and gardens; install fences; build pathways; and plant trees, shrubs, and flowering plants.

Civic Works' Community Development Director develops partnerships in which communities and Civic Works' teams work side-by-side on projects. Civic Works leads residents as they define problems (dumping, lack of greenery), identify project sites, and propose outcomes (gardens, tot lots, green areas). Residents work with members in clearing sites and making improvements. Residents are encouraged to recruit volunteers and identify in-kind resources to maintain the projects once completed. Civic Works meets regularly with sponsors to ensure that progress is satisfactory and to evaluate completed projects.

As with many urban revitalization programs, Civic Works has learned that completing renovations is one of the easiest parts of the process. Ensuring that those sites remain beautiful, green, and vibrant requires the backing of strong partners who will maintain the lots once Civic Works' teams have moved on.

Because faith-based groups anchor many of the neighborhoods Civic Works serves, the program seeks partnerships with local churches. Several church buildings are immediately adjacent to vacant lots that Civic Works teams are converting from community eyesores – full of trash and debris – into mini-parks or gardens.

One example is the program's work at McElderry Park Sacred Commons. For the past three years, Civic Works' Community Lot Team has worked with the Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, community residents, and local, national and international volunteers to create a beautiful space behind the church that incorporates a children's vegetable garden, flowering plants, shrubs, trees, a meditation labyrinth, and art (students from the Maryland Institute College of Art painted murals on the rear walls of neighboring businesses).

Civic Works teams also organize neighborhood clean-ups to remove bulk trash, clear alleys and parks. They organize "Saturday Service Days" in which volunteers and corps members complete improvements at sites throughout Baltimore. In 2004, there were 15 Saturday Service Days. These weekend service projects allow more volunteers to participate in Civic Works' activities (in particular corporate partner volunteer teams that may not be available during regular business hours).

Cross-program Connections

Each year, Civic Works hosts several AmeriCorps*VISTA members who help build the capacity of the organization. VISTA members have worked on special projects and events, raised thousands of dollars for programs, and assisted in the development and implementation of new and innovative Civic Works programs (B'More Green – an

environmental technology training program funded by EPA, and Project Liberty – an AmeriCorps emergency preparedness education program).

Under the direction of an AmeriCorps*VISTA, Civic Works also maintains a free community plant nursery in East Baltimore. Civic Works partners with local nurseries and home improvement warehouse stores to collect damaged and unsold green goods, nurture and maintain the plants and redistribute them free of charge to community gardeners throughout the city. Over the past two years, Civic Works' community plant nursery has distributed over 20,000 plants and engaged hundreds of volunteers in the process.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Volunteers are an integral component of everything Civic Works accomplishes. In 2004, Civic Works engaged more than 1,300 volunteers who helped transform vacant lots, assist students in afterschool programs, rehabilitate low-income housing, provide emergency preparedness information to citizens, distribute free plants to community gardeners, assist corps members with job readiness and academics, and assist with a myriad of other successful projects.

Successes

In 2002, Civic Works hired ABT Associates, an international research and evaluation firm, to evaluate two of Civic Works' programs, Civic Works Community Lot team and a Recreation & Parks Center afterschool program. As part of their evaluation, ABT completed extensive case profiles and cost-benefit analyses of the programs. In addition, ABT surveyed members of all of Civic Works' 2002-03 AmeriCorps teams. ABT's key findings included:

- The Community Lot team generates a net return to society of \$217,680. The Recreation and Parks program generates a net return to society of \$655,308. This means that for each dollar spent, the Community Lot and Recreation and Parks programs generate more than \$2 in benefits.
- The large majority of corps members reported being very pleased with their Civic Works experience. Over 91 percent of respondents asserted that they were either very or somewhat satisfied with their experience in Civic Works, and 88 percent reported that, looking back, they made the right choice by enrolling in Civic Works.
- The Community Lot Team has developed an effective model for engaging economically disadvantaged youth (particularly African-American men) in productive service opportunities that prepare them for future careers.
- Leaders at neighborhood organizations assert that not only has Civic Works facilitated Community Lot projects, but it has also served as a catalyst for other collaborative efforts among local groups.
- The Recreation and Parks Center project provides economically disadvantaged elementary school students with important supports. Recreation Department staff assert that the project is so popular that it motivates families to participate in all Department afterschool projects and appears to increase attendance at all projects.

Civic Works also keeps very detailed information on project accomplishments. Since 1994, Civic Works members and volunteers have removed 1,728,073 pounds of trash; planted 13,479 flowers; tutored and assisted 11,673 students; planted 21,467 trees; distributed 1,968 tree saplings; distributed 197,057 recycling schedules; boarded and cleared 2,747 houses and lots; built 613 tree pits; removed 326 truck loads of bulk trash; built and installed 214 flower boxes; cleared and beautified 78 lots; planted 91 community gardens; converted 38 lots into community parks; installed 27 fences; rehabilitated 25 houses; and built 21 playgrounds. Civic Works has established scores of partnerships with communities and non-profit groups.

MASSACHUSETTS AmeriCorps Cape Cod

Focus: Environment
Issue Area:
Environmental Protection
and Management

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

AmeriCorps Cape Cod (ACC) is a residential service program dedicated to offering a diverse group of twenty-six full-time environmentally-focused adults an opportunity to enhance their personal development, foster civic values, build community leadership, mobilize volunteers, and respond to critical environmental and community needs within the 15 towns of Barnstable County (commonly known as Cape Cod).

Program Description

The Corps of 26 members reside in program-provided housing and focus their service activities in four areas:

- Land and Water based Conservation
- Environmental Education
- Disaster Preparedness and Response
- Volunteer Engagement

Corps members participate in a wide variety of service activities within the program's focus areas. Each member has an Individual Placement (IP) two days per week in which he/she serves on long-term projects with a specific nonprofit, government or community-based group. IP projects include the development of land management plans, creation and support of neighborhood stewardship programs, endangered species monitoring, wildland fire management and development and implementation of disaster education programs. Two days per week Corps members serve together in teams on Group Projects (GP). These projects are short-term, labor intensive, field-based projects that often incorporate community volunteers. Example projects include: habitat restoration, invasive species removal, erosion control, and trail maintenance and construction projects. One day each week the Corps members are divided into small teams for COD Day (Community Outreach and Development Day). Corps members work together in these teams to develop community service projects and community outreach and educational materials and presentations. COD Day activities include developing and leading projects for Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, annual events such as the Cape Cod Canal Clean Up and Earth Celebration!, and presentations to school, afterschool and community groups.

Corps members are constantly visible within the Cape Cod community and are encouraged to attend

community meetings, informational sessions, public events and public meetings. All Corps members are trained in public speaking and each member gives at least two presentations during their service year on topics such as ACC, national service, their own service experience or service opportunities for community members. Presentations can be formal or informal in nature and audiences range from kindergartners, to retired senior groups, to elected officials or town committee members.

ACC has been extremely effective in its endeavors; it has created strong relationships with over 120 government, nonprofit and community based groups and has offered its members a unique and varied experience.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

By living and serving together, members develop strong relationships with their housemates and each has the benefit of a strong support network immediately within their grasp.

Supporting Data

Data collected from community partners confirms the value of service provided by members to the Cape Cod community and environment. Surveys of community partners affirm positive outcomes for the needs served by members and the volunteers they manage. Member's self-assessments and continued commitment to service and ACC after graduation demonstrate personal growth and a valuable service experience.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

ACC has built partnerships with over 120 government, nonprofit, school and community based groups. Partners include the National Park Service, American Red Cross, State Department of Coastal Zone Management, town shellfish, conservation and public works departments, and community land trusts.

In 2002 ACC united the Public Works and Conservation departments of the town of Harwich, the Conservation Commission, Harwich Conservation Trust, and local Girl and Boy Scout troops in a week-long restoration project at Thompson's Field (93-acre plot of protected open space). The project has become an annual event in the town of Harwich and ACC has now piloted a similar project in the town of Bourne.

Cross-program Connections

ACC and the Cape and Islands Senior Corps have worked together to organize service projects, participate in social events and meet regularly to share and reflect on service experiences. The social events and meetings build cross-generational bonds, promote the sharing of resources, and prevent duplication of services.

In 2003, an ACC member and an AmeriCorps*VISTA member worked together as part of the Massachusetts InterCorps Council to organize a beach clean up. Over 150 AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and RSVP members from across the state, as well as state commission staff, traveled to the Cape for the event.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

ACC members work to foster a community service ethic within the community by recruiting volunteers to join with them on environmental and disaster preparedness projects. Projects

are small: a restoration project with neighbors who abut a conservation property; to large: Canal Clean Up, a project that attracts over 50 volunteers annually.

Potential for Replication

The innovative structure of the program not only offers members a well-rounded service experience but also addresses the varied needs of the Cape Cod community and environment. Through IPs, members utilize personal initiative to address needs that require sustained, long-term attention. Through GPs, members meet immediate resource management needs and learn to perform technical field skills and manage others. Through COD Day, members learn to work as a team to develop and implement community events and enhance their public speaking skills. The residential component provides support for members, enhances their service experience and makes it possible for members to immerse themselves in the community they serve.

Successes

In April of 2004, when an oil barge released 98,000 gallons of oil into waters off the Cape's western shoreline, ACC responded by sending members to the bird rehabilitation site to assist with the treatment of 454 oil affected birds.

To prepare senior citizens for disasters, the American Red Cross partnered with ACC to conduct "Well Aware" disaster education presentations. The presentations provided critical information such as what to do in disasters and how to handle grandchildren and pets. Over 120 seniors attended the presentations and educational materials have been distributed to hundreds more through local Senior Centers.

ACC has a graduation rate of over 96%. A third of ACC alumni have stayed to work within Barnstable County after graduation; 72% of alumni remain active by participating as service partners, volunteering on service projects, offering training, and assisting with recruitment. Over 25% of members have completed two terms as AmeriCorps or Peace Corps members. Two alumni have been hired as staff and two alumni serve as representatives on the program's Advisory Board.

Recently, storm water has been recognized as a major player in surface water pollution, especially in fragile coastal areas such as Cape Cod. During periods of heavy rain, storm drains allow roadside pollutants to be flushed into local waterways, threatening water quality. Many towns on Cape Cod lack maps and documentation of their stormwater infrastructure, important first steps towards identifying problem discharge areas. In 2002, member Melissa Mills trained fellow members in the use of GPS (global positioning system) and GIS (Geographic Information System) units. ACC provided teams of members to perform detailed assessments of the local stormwater systems using GPS and GIS in three towns. Since 2003, Melissa has returned to train subsequent Corps and the program has now partnered with five towns to map and assess their stormwater infrastructure.

ACC has also developed water conservation education programs to assist communities in meeting the educational requirements of the EPA regulations. This program year, the ACC has two IPs to address water conservation, education and quality needs. One member serves as the regional Stormwater Education and Remediation Outreach Coordinator and another serves as coordinator for a school-based groundwater education program. The mapping and assessment projects and education activities have far-reaching implications for the cleanup of local waters.

MASSACHUSETTS YouthStar

Focus: Health and Public Safety

Issue Area: Youth Health and Violence Prevention

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

YouthStar is a program that engages high-risk urban youth and young adults in a year of service through a service-learning program focusing on Public Safety, Public Health and Emergency Response. YouthStar addresses significant community needs in Chelsea, Revere, East Boston, and Lynn, MA. The program strives to:

- Increase Public Safety by engaging 200 high-risk youth in sustained violence prevention, volunteer community service projects and alternative Public Safety activities;
- Improve Public Health by reducing risky behaviors and other related issues through peer-to-peer outreach, individual education, workshops, health clinic, and a hunger relief project;
- Increase Public Safety and homeland security through the participation of young adults in Emergency Response efforts including maintaining the CAMEO Database for the city of Chelsea;
- Strengthening communities through increased youth and young adult volunteerism; and
- Provide service related training, educational, life skills, and pre-employment development to assist members in their transitions to adulthood and life after AmeriCorps.

Program Description

Based on 12 years of successful AmeriCorps programming, Roca has identified core needs and appropriate service activities to address and prepare communities with the skills and resources needed to prevent, mitigate, prepare for and respond to acts of terrorism, natural disasters and other emergencies. The project provides a solid core curriculum for member development, education, training, and community service used to train young, multicultural community members and provide long-term, sustainable change within local communities.

YouthStar members design and implement all components of the project. They are intensively trained in sexuality education, public safety, street outreach, patient confidentiality, risk reduction behavior change theory, promotion of counseling and testing, conflict resolution, peacemaking circles and cultural sensitivity. YouthStar corps members provide: daily violence prevention activities for 200 youth and young adults,

volunteer and alternative public safety activities including peacemaking circles and community service projects, and the promotion of multicultural diversity in the community through four major community events. Additionally, members perform extensive outreach to approximately 18,000 young people across local communities to promote health education, create and deliver health education workshops, run a bi-monthly food pantry, attend community meetings, and work with the City of Chelsea Emergency Response Director to update and maintain the CAMEO Database. Members also have the opportunity to work toward their GED and/or to increase college preparatory skills.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Much of this program's innovation rests in its origin and the interconnectedness of all of its parent organization's programs. Roca is a values-led youth and young adult development organization. Roca serves 600 youth and young adults between the ages of 12-26 intensively, works with an additional 300, outreaches to approximately 20,000, and is in relationship with approximately 300 parents annually.

The YouthStar program has a lasting impact on its high risk urban youth members by providing an alternative to violence and support for post-program transition. Corps members receive extensive training including a comprehensive orientation, the acquisition of a wide range of competencies, and gained extensive experience and opportunities for learning and demonstrating leadership through community service projects. In addition, YouthStar provides a transitioning component that focuses on life after AmeriCorps.

The community directly benefits from the work of Youth Star through the program's food pantries -- the only youth run food pantries in the city -- and through health education outreach, which includes information distribution and an on-site clinic run in partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital. Members operate and staff the pantries, collect donated and purchased food and provide educational materials to recipients, many of whom are fairly isolated and would not otherwise receive some information and support.

Supporting Data

YouthStar members also monitor and track the progress toward their objectives through tally logs, pre and post tests, community partner feedback surveys, attendance logs, and the data from the Youth Development Outcomes Project for the young people they serve.

In the past year, Roca's YouthStar Program successfully recruited 75 eligible young people and enrolled 32 into the program, with 27 members completing the year. These were all high-risk urban youth who were facing a host of issues related to the education, employability and overall well being. Roca's program is one of the few programs nationally that provides diverse and high-risk youth an opportunity to serve their communities. YouthStar enrolled the first Sudanese member, which follows our enrollment of the first Somali and Cambodian members in the nation.

Other key accomplishments during the year include:

- 272 non-AmeriCorps volunteers were involved in AmeriCorps services and activities
- 7,800 people received 23,400 harm reduction and bilingual educational materials
- More than 1500 people received food from the YouthStar run Food Pantry, with 38% of them being elderly
- 100% of all corps members participated in Peacemaking Circles, which helped to build leadership skills and confidence

- 26 clean-ups of Chelsea & Revere wetlands were completed with more than 7,800 lbs. of trash and debris removed and 2,000 community members receiving environmental outreach materials

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

YouthStar has fifteen primary community partners including local churches, City Government, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), and other community programs and organizations. For example, YouthStar staff maintain close contact with MGH personnel to ensure a continuum of care is available to individuals who are reached through YouthStar member's health education and promotion work. Additionally, through the relationships of Roca, YouthStar is in relationship with the local police, Department of Social Services, and Chelsea Public Schools. Partnerships with these organizations connect corps members to resources, additional opportunities for relationship development, exposure to other organizations that focus on different community issues who can offer experiential education.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

As YouthStar sits in the middle of an organization deeply embedded in the community, the capacity of members to create opportunities and recruit volunteers throughout the community is enormous. Members engage volunteers in one-time service projects as well as through long-term community strengthening projects. Annually, members engage approximately 300-400 youth, young adults, and adults in various service opportunities.

Potential for Replication

YouthStar employs the strategic methods of Roca, Inc. in its programming. These strategies include street work and outreach; transformational relationships; creating opportunities for education, employment, and life skills development; peacemaking circles; and engaging institutions. These methods work well with very high-risk populations of youth and young adults and would be able to be learned and adapted for other programs. Additionally, the YouthStar program structure has proved to be an effective model for high-risk youth corps.

Successes

YouthStar's accomplishments and experiences include: 1) Improving health care access for youth and young adults; 2) Addressing youth health issues through education and prevention activities in the areas of teen pregnancy, HIV, AIDS and STD's, mental health, substance abuse, nutrition, domestic violence, abuse and neglect; 3) Providing hunger relief via a bi-weekly food pantry and nutritional education; 4) Improving the status of targeted wetland areas in Chelsea and Revere; and 5) Improving citizen recycling in Chelsea and Revere.

As a program of Roca, YouthStar is committed to documenting the impact of their work through an outcomes-based evaluation system. Roca's overall outcome is young people and families thriving and leading change. Both Roca's process and outcome evaluation focus on the development of a sense of connection and purpose in young people and families. Roca's evaluation system was developed over a two-year period with input from community partners, young people, evaluators, youth development professionals, funding partners and the support of the Surdna Foundation.

MICHIGAN

Groundwater Stewardship Program

Focus: Environmental
Issue Area: Water
Protection

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program's (MGSP) mission is to reduce the risks to groundwater from pesticide and nitrogen fertilizer use. Members provide community outreach and education to help people make connections between household activities and protection of water quality. Members address not only pesticide and fertilizer concerns, but also other water quality issues such as septic system maintenance, water well protection, storm water management, recycling, hazardous household products, and fuel storage.

Program Description

To address these risks and issues, members serve with citizens in three primary ways.

First, members meet with homeowners, renters, and farmers one-on-one. During these meetings members help their client identify any environmental risks on their property or in their home. Once a risk has been identified, members then help develop a plan to reduce or eliminate the risk. For example, if pesticides were stored where they are within reach of children or pets, this would be a high risk. The lower risk alternative would be to store them in a lockable container out of the reach of kids or pets. Or better yet, not to store them at home at all.

AmeriCorps members also serve with citizens in group settings. For example, they may meet with service clubs, church groups, garden clubs, township boards, or other interested organizations. During these sessions members cover much of the same information they would in a one-on-one setting. In these cases, they discuss background information on groundwater protection and then teach the attendees how to conduct a risk assessment at their own home. Members are always available to provide follow up, if necessary.

The third way AmeriCorps members conduct community outreach is through fairs and festivals. Members will set up information booths and interactive displays to educate the people who attend these events. This informal setting allows citizens to ask questions in a non-threatening, non-regulatory environment. Education at these events has convinced people to start testing their well water, inspect their septic systems,

and even to properly dispose of old products they had in the barn or shed like DDT or mercury.

A final component of AmeriCorps members' service involves presenting groundwater/water quality education to students. Members present in both classrooms and other settings such as scout groups, field days, and camps to students of all ages.

The MGSP AmeriCorps Program is a statewide project covering 49 counties in Michigan. 15 members serve full time with the program. Members serve locally with groups such as county Conservation Districts, county Michigan State University Extension offices, local environmental groups, county health departments, and more. These local partnerships provide guidance to MGSP AmeriCorps members to help them identify service projects and local water quality outreach needs. Members bring these partners together several times during the year for discussions of local issues, sharing success stories, and community needs assessments. MGSP AmeriCorps members make possible these partnerships which otherwise would not be formed.

Innovation

Lasting Impact/ Supporting Data

The MGSP has also developed and implemented a comprehensive evaluation program. By measuring baseline data, program impacts and outcomes, member and staff attitudes and thoughts on the program and training, and the opinions of those the program is trying to reach, the program has improved every year. AmeriCorps members are also given an opportunity to reflect in a focus group setting on the impact of their service over the long term – the impact on both their communities and themselves. The evaluation program is coordinated by the Center for Evaluative Studies at Michigan State University (MSU), whose expertise has helped generate valid and meaningful information on the program's progress. While the evaluation program pays for a staff member's time at MSU, the expertise of graduate students has been useful for evaluation assistance; one student used the work as her master's thesis. For program improvement, building partnerships, and protecting funding, it is absolutely vital that the time and money is made available for a thorough evaluation plan. The MGSP feels that in return for the federal and state dollars it receives it must provide the best service possible to state residents. This would be impossible without program evaluation.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

To deliver groundwater outreach and education, the program and its AmeriCorps members rely on partnerships with county Conservation Districts and county Michigan State University Extension offices. These partners have the experience necessary to serve as mentors for members. The assistance of the members allows the partner organizations to address a set of environmental issues they previously had not. AmeriCorps members bring together natural resource protection agencies to address groundwater quality issues - issues that are vital to protecting both individual water wells at homes and farms and community water supplies which rely on groundwater.

Potential for Replication

As outlined above, the MGSP provides outreach in the form of environmental risk assessments. These assessments (called Home*A*Syst and Farm*A*Syst) exist in many other states. Cooperative Extension offices, Conservation Districts, and the Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service have developed state specific tools similar to what the MGSP has developed for Michigan. While these assessment learning

tools exist, in many cases the delivery mechanism does not. By using AmeriCorps members to form community partnerships and deliver this education and outreach, Michigan reaches far more people than most other states. Tackling groundwater quality issues with a community wide approach is the perfect role for AmeriCorps. This approach, if replicated in other states, could facilitate groundwater and environmental risk reduction all around the country. Further, it could bring a greater return on the investment many states have made in developing tools to address risks around the home and farm. The key is finding a way to get that information into the hands of those who need it most. AmeriCorps is a proven way to do this.

Successes

The MGSP has developed comprehensive program evaluation tools to measure impact in the communities members serve as well as the impact the program has on its members. Program evaluation conducted by Michigan State University’s Center for Evaluative Studies indicates both an increase in citizen knowledge about groundwater issues and changes in attitude and behavior that help protect groundwater. Similar changes in knowledge have been reported in evaluations of teachers whose students received groundwater education from an MGSP AmeriCorps member.

After receiving groundwater education either through one-on-one service or in a community group presentation, the following responses were given regarding their experience:

- 87% indicated a better understanding of groundwater protection;
- 77% would recommend the program to friends and neighbors;
- 81% plan to make change(s) in practice to protect groundwater.

The program has shifted its evaluation efforts over the past two years to capture the number and type of changes people are making to help protect groundwater. Evaluation results show the following changes have been or are being made by those reached by a corps member:

- 36% no longer store unwanted or unused pesticides in their garage or home;
- 55% now check soil nutrient levels before selecting a fertilizer;
- 31% now identify the pest before using a pesticide;
- 36% now measure the size of their lawn before applying fertilizer to ensure accurate application;
- 32% now have their well water tested annually;
- 19% have recently had their septic systems checked and pumped.

The program also has a youth education component. AmeriCorps members make presentations in classrooms to supplement existing science curricula in the areas of the water cycle, watersheds, groundwater, and water quality testing. Teachers are evaluated following a presentation. Here are some results from that evaluation:

<u>Question</u>	<u>% Agree</u>	<u>% Strongly Agree</u>
The MGSP presentation was valuable to your science curriculum	24.2%	73%
The presentation filled a gap in the science curriculum, which the students benefited from	36.3%	52.1%
I would recommend this presentation to other teachers	22.5%	75.3%

Note: no teachers responded “disagree” with any of these questions. Some responded they were “neutral” on a particular question.

MINNESOTA

Admission Possible

Focus: Education
Issue Area: College Admissions Assistance

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

Admission Possible's mission is to help make college admission possible for talented, motivated and economically disadvantaged students in Minnesota by providing ACT test preparation services and admissions and financial aid consulting. The organization has four main goals:

- Improve student ACT scores, a substantial barrier for many low-income students, by at least 10%;
- Have at least 80% of the program's students be admitted to at least one college;
- Have 100% of the students who are admitted receive enough financial aid to be able to attend college;
- Instill an ethic of service in both students and staff.

Program Description

Admission Possible is an organization founded on two fundamental beliefs: that many low-income high school students lack the resources to compete effectively for admission to colleges and universities; and that colleges and universities are very interested in admitting students from low-income backgrounds, but have difficulty identifying and attracting them.

Admission Possible is located in St. Paul, Minnesota and works with nine metro-area high schools, currently serving more than 550 students. Out of the graduating class of 2004, 98% of Admission Possible students have earned admission into college – a rate more than twice the national average!

Admission Possible achieves its mission through the service of 21 AmeriCorps members, three full-time AmeriCorps*VISTA members, five full-time staff members, and 6 Macalester work-study students. This group of young, idealistic people is dedicated to changing the world of college admissions.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Admission Possible's work has a truly profound effect on its AmeriCorps members as well as on the low-income students served. Each member works with his/her students for over 160 hours per year. This allows students and members to develop a significant level of

trust and often leads to lasting mentorship relationships – for example, one of the most-often requested services from students who are now in college is to give them the contact information for their former ‘coach’. Admission Possible challenges its members to provide the highest quality services and to strive to meet the needs of their students under often non-ideal circumstances. It is in part these high standards - for members to take responsibility for their students and that every student served has the potential to go to college - that make this experience so meaningful and also so successful.

In the community, Admission Possible is laying the foundation for a strong and diverse future workforce for the Minnesota economy. Many community and business leaders are worried about the future of Minnesota’s work force, and Admission Possible addresses this need by helping students advance their education. The program also generates service to the community by having the students work with younger students to talk to them about preparing for college; as one example, Admission Possible seniors delivered workshops to 9th and 10th grade students at three participating high schools this fall to talk about why college is important and what they can be doing right now to prepare for college. This type of activity, with students helping other students who are following in their footsteps, is not only helpful to each student individually; it helps change the culture of the school to one where the students themselves value academic success.

According to a recent analysis produced by several McKinsey & Company consultants, the program’s “Social Return on Investment” is between five and seven dollars for every dollar invested. This return is driven mostly by the increased taxes college graduates will pay (and to a much lesser extent, by the reduced costs of incarceration and social services).

Supporting Data

Formal and informal evaluations also show that the program has an immense impact on its participants, both students and AmeriCorps members. See “Successes” section for detailed information.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Admission Possible has earned the strong support of the principals in each of the nine partner high schools. The program works in collaboration with the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership by encouraging students to participate in one of the summer enrichment programs they help coordinate. Admission Possible works with the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) and their “Get Ready!” program, which provides college readiness information to low-income 4th – 8th grade students. HESO provides training and materials for AmeriCorps members and, as part of their community service, students lead workshops for 9th and 10th graders.

In addition, Admission Possible works closely with several local scholarship providers, such as the Wallin Scholarship Program and the Page Foundation, to ensure that they receive applications for scholarships from strong and worthy applicants - and that Admission Possible students receive the funding they need to afford college. Approximately one-third of this year’s graduating seniors received one of these two scholarships!

The most unique partnership, however, is the one with AmeriCorps itself. Admission Possible is the only program in the country that applies the resources of national service to the problem of college access. By harnessing the power of young people’s idealism, and drawing on the infrastructure provided by AmeriCorps, Admission Possible has enlisted recent college graduates to work directly with low-income students who want to attend college—but who lack the resources and skills to navigate effectively the college admission process.

Potential for Replication

Replicating Admission Possible's services should be relatively easy - for example, it was replicated in nine different high schools in the Twin Cities, and would work in any area where there are low-income high school students and significant concentrations of recent college graduates. The low cost of providing their services makes the creation of new programs easier because less money needs to be raised. The documented success of Admission Possible's experience in St. Paul and Minneapolis will make it less difficult to raise the modest funds needed to start a new program.

Admission Possible uses the infrastructure and resources provided by AmeriCorps as the primary method of service delivery. Though AmeriCorps funding has fluctuated somewhat over the last couple of years, there is strong bi-partisan support for AmeriCorps and most observers agree that its existence and growth are likely (Admission Possible has actually experienced a significant increase in its funding, including a 35% increase last year). Admission Possible's experience with AmeriCorps indicates that this program is ideal for the Corporation for National and Community Service's funding criteria: results oriented, successful, and focused on the educational achievement of low-income students.

There are a number of other ways one could harness the idealism of America's young people to address this problem. One could develop a partnership with colleges and universities and ask them to provide college "work study" jobs to current college students willing to provide college preparation services (Admission Possible has six such Macalester College students who working in this capacity). Or one could work with area employers to engage recent college graduates to volunteer together at a local high school.

Successes

The percentage of successfully admitted students in the Admission Possible program has continually increased since its inception. In its first year, 80% of the senior students earned admission to college, growing to 89% in the program's second year. This year, 163 out of 167, or 98% have been admitted to college, bringing Admission Possible's three-year average to 92% admittance! Of those accepted to college, 90% are headed to a four-year institution.

Student test score increases have averaged 14% over the past three years. By comparison, the leading for-profit companies like Kaplan and Princeton Review advertise average increases of 12-14%.

The program is still relatively new and is currently gathering reliable data on the students once they go to college. Preliminary results indicate that, of all the students who were admitted to college from 2002-2004, roughly 80% are still enrolled in college. Two staff members work full-time with the 300-plus alumni to keep in touch with them and connect them with services designed to keep them in school.

9th and 10th grade students report overwhelmingly that they find the workshops extremely useful in thinking about college. While the program does not have evidence yet of the number of those students who end up enrolling in the program, two high schools where these workshops were piloted in 2003-2004 saw at least a doubling of the student applications to participate in Admission Possible.

MINNESOTA

Early Literacy Corps

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Early
Childhood Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Early Literacy Corps, an innovative AmeriCorps-Head Start partnership, links the people power of AmeriCorps with a research-based program design developed under the guidance of early literacy experts. The Early Literacy Corps (ELC) strives to:

- Improve the early literacy skills of preschool children, preparing them to enter kindergarten with the skills necessary for learning to read and school success;
- Expand teaching skills and early childhood competency of members and participating Head Start staff through research-based early literacy training and ongoing instructional and professional development coaching;
- Increase educational opportunities for members, including Head Start parents serving as members, through high-quality training and AmeriCorps education awards; and
- Expand volunteer capacity of Head Start programs through increased parent involvement in early literacy activities and development of new community partnerships.

Program Description

Members receive intensive training on early literacy skill development and ongoing instructional coaching from early literacy experts. This training approach results in individualized instruction for preschoolers that fosters the early literacy skills critical to school success and the eventual development of reading proficiency. Because Head Start enrolls low-income children who face significant educational barriers associated with poverty, including a high number of English language learners, members serve highly disadvantaged children. The critical instruction and support that members provide in Head Start classrooms improve Head Start children's ability to enter kindergarten ready to learn to read and to succeed.

In 2003, the ELC was launched, deploying members in four Head Start programs in urban and rural communities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area and Central Minnesota. The ELC enrolled 23 AmeriCorps members who served 354 preschool children in 22 Head Start classrooms. Members were representative of the diverse communities in which they served including people of color and immigrants or refugees. Eight of

the members were Head Start parents. The diverse skills and talents coupled with specialized training enabled members to be successful in serving Head Start children.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

The Early Literacy Corps makes a lasting impact on the children it serves, its AmeriCorps members, and Minnesota's communities. Through its innovative partnerships and research-based approach to training and preschool instruction, ELC is a high-quality early intervention program. ELC has successfully implemented a model where members and Head Start teachers work in partnership to assess each child's skills through regular progress monitoring and develop individualized instruction to strategically address each child's early literacy skill development. This process builds upon children's literacy strengths and strategically intervenes in their areas of need.

ELC represents an investment in both Minnesota's children and its future child development workers. Members and Head Start staff have benefited from high-quality training and personalized professional development coaching. These activities contribute to the field of child development in Minnesota by creating a better-trained and higher-skilled workforce. Not only do today's preschoolers benefit from this program, but tomorrow's will as well.

Supporting Data

The Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank estimates that the State's investment in early childhood education will bring a real return of up to 16% – more than any other economic development effort. But achieving this return requires early investment and providing high-quality programs to prepare low-income children for school success. In 2003, 57% of entering Minnesota kindergartners lacked proficiency in the critical early literacy skills necessary for school success. Literacy skills at age three are strong predictors of third grade reading scores. Minnesota programs designed to prepare low-income children for school are not funded or staffed sufficiently to achieve the impressive results of model early intervention programs. The Early Literacy Corps addresses this gap by providing extra resources through effective partnerships.

Mid-year literacy scores indicated that children being served by ELC members were making improvement in their early literacy skills. All children made meaningful progress in the four early literacy skill development areas (rhyming, alliteration, picture identification, letter recognition.) With kindergarten readiness being a core goal of the program, this result was outstanding.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

A dynamic partnership between the Minnesota Literacy Council, St. Croix River Education District, Minnesota Head Start Association, and four Head Start programs guided the program's development and implementation.

Through the leadership of St. Croix River Education District and the input of early literacy experts from the University of Minnesota, ELC implemented an innovative, research-based approach to member training and preschool instruction. All ELC members and many Head Start employees participated in a seven-session, research-based early literacy course that prepared them to individualize instruction for children.

All members were also trained to use two tools, a child literacy assessment and a classroom environmental survey, to guide decisions about instructional strategies and classroom

enhancements. Early literacy trainers also worked with Head Start coordinators to provide regular coaching that supported the implementation of early literacy goals and strategies.

Potential for Replication

ELC has excellent potential for replication in other states. This innovative approach to partnership between AmeriCorps and Head Start, supported by high-quality training, coaching and assessment is a valuable model for any state concerned about the kindergarten-readiness of its children.

Successes

With highly committed partners and an innovative program design, the ELC has achieved significant successes during its first year of operation. While final outcome data is not available at this time, initial outcome data has shown members are making a critical difference in the education of disadvantaged children by providing individualized instruction focused on early literacy.

Data collected from the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation classroom assessment tool showed that training and ongoing coaching of members resulted in richer classroom environments with increased resources to enhance early literacy skill development. Member instructional skills and competence had also increased as measured through coaching and evaluations.



Finally, participating Head Start agencies have identified participation in the ELC as a valuable partnership that has provided not only enhanced classroom instruction, but professional development resources previously not available to their agencies. The satisfaction of the four agencies and their belief in the value of the program in enhancing children's outcomes has resulted in three additional agencies partnering with the program for its second year.

MISSISSIPPI

America Reads

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Literacy/
Teacher Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

America Reads-Mississippi is dedicated to improving the reading skills of students, encouraging public awareness and support of literacy, and helping to increase the number of certified teachers in Mississippi.

Program Description

America Reads Mississippi (ARM) carries out its mission through the program performance measures as follows:

School Day Reading Tutoring: Currently, 268 ARM AmeriCorps members tutor one-on-one and in small groups with 3,282 students (an average 12 students per member) per day. The improvement goal is for 90% of tutored students to improve their reading performance by at least one letter grade over what would normally be expected.

Extended Day/Year Reading Tutoring: Currently, 261 AmeriCorps members tutor 2,095 students (eight students per member on average) for 1,566 hours (six hours per member on average) each week before and after school in public schools and pre-schools, and in community and faith-based organizations. The improvement goal is for 90% of the tutored students who are tutored regularly (two or more times per week) to show improvement in their class work, attitude toward school, and behavior in school by one letter grade over what would normally be expected.

Volunteer Recruitment: Currently 262 members collaborate with state and local community and faith-based organizations and have recruited 3,652 volunteers who volunteered 9,379 hours in 47 local service projects, the Make A Difference Day National Service Project, and with school-related activities benefiting 23,162 people. With 30% of the program year completed, the program has met 27% of the number of volunteers recruited objective, 26% of the number of volunteer hours objective, and 77% of the number of beneficiaries objective.

Member Training: Currently, 268 ARM AmeriCorps members have participated in 16 trainings conducted in collaboration with state agencies, partnering universities, and community and faith-based organizations through six courses including: 1) Tutor Training, 2) Volunteer Recruitment and Management, 3)

Citizenship/Civic Engagement and Homeland Security, 4) Accessing Higher Education, 5) Personal Skills Development (including CPR), and 6) Life After AmeriCorps. In addition to ARM sponsored trainings, members have attended a total of 137 trainings sponsored by their school and/or school district. Additionally, member team leaders (one from each school service site) attended the first team leader training on leadership skills on November 16, 2004. The two remaining trainings will focus on leadership skills, national service day projects, and giving public presentations.

Citizenship, Civic Engagement, and Homeland Security: ARM members have received training to begin forming Jr. Citizen Corps Clubs at the school service sites. Each member and site supervisor has been given a Citizenship Facilitation Guide. This guide outlines the steps each team will take to form, facilitate, document, and engage students in the Jr. Citizen Corps Clubs. Monthly Citizenship Training began with an overview of being an effective citizen, ways to enhance student awareness of emergency preparedness and homeland security issues, as well as involve students in planning National Service Days. Materials, support and technical assistance are being provided by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the Red Cross, and ARM Program Staff.

A Mid-Year Program Survey was mailed to all members and school staff including school superintendents and agency heads, school principals, and school site supervisors. Results were positive regarding the impact of all performance measure areas with 93% to 100% of both school staff and members indicating that the tutoring, volunteer recruitment, member and team leader training, and citizenship activities are making positive differences for students.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

ARM has been part of some of its schools and communities since the program began in 1998. Many of the ARM members go on to be hired by the school districts in which they have served and most go on to use their AmeriCorps Education Award to attend college. Currently, about 75% of ARM members want to become teachers. Some ARM AmeriCorps school teams are comprised of more than one family member serving on the same team which reinforces the value of service in families. ARM-tutored students are actively involved in service-learning in addition to receiving one-on-one and small group tutoring.

Supporting Data

ARM contracts with an outside evaluator to measure impact and outcome. ARM has been fully recruited each year, 100% of biannual stakeholder surveys indicate high satisfaction, and students increased their reading level by 1.5 letter grades in the 2003-2004 program year.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

ARM partners with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) through Local Emergency Management Agencies to provide training for ARM members and presentations of safety and emergency preparedness to families and students. ARM has maintained partnerships with at least 28 of the 51 current school partners for more than four years.

Cross-program Connections

ARM members collaborate with members from other AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and Senior Corps programs within their school district and communities.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Since 1998, ARM members have recruited over 80,000 volunteers who have volunteered over 282,000 hours with an economic impact of \$4,123,003 based on the value of service from the Economic Report of the President.

Potential for Replication

There is significant potential for replication in other states in all of the program areas. Specifically, ARM staff has presented at conferences for GEAR UP Mississippi and Points of Light to provide models for implementation of the ARM training model and the Citizenship and Civic Engagement Series.

Successes

Over the last six years, America Reads-Mississippi AmeriCorps members have served over 2,333,250 hours and:

- Tutored over 6,000 students each school day demonstrating through pre- and post-tests and teacher surveys a significant reading gain and overall academic improvement of tutored students;
- Tutored students after school and in the summer with classroom teachers reporting 95% of tutored students improving their reading grade by at least one level, as well as demonstrating positive improvement in attitudes toward school, homework habits, and classroom behavior;
- Recruited over 80,000 volunteers who have volunteered over 282,000 hours with an economic impact of \$4,123,003 based on the value of service from the Economic Report of the President;
- Initiated over 1,258 local community service projects helping to meet local needs;
- Served over 73,266 hours in activities that improved communication with parents and strengthened the home-school connection; and
- Decreased the state's critical teacher shortage by AmeriCorps members earning education awards totaling \$7,229,250, so they can further their higher education and become certified teachers.



MONTANA

Western Montana Literacy Support Corps

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Parental Involvement

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Western Montana Literacy
Support Corps
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Program Mission and Goals

The Western Montana Literacy Support Corps strives to:

- Promote learning environments that empower parents, educators and community members to truly partner in efforts to increase literacy and overall academic achievement.
- Develop Family Resource Centers that bring together people of all ages and backgrounds building sustainable, collaborative networks to promote healthy, nurturing home, school and community environments in support of children's learning.
- Increase volunteerism programs that strengthen parenting, family literacy, tutoring and mentoring.
- Develop community building, literacy and leadership skills in members and volunteers through high quality training, "best practices" experience, and leadership opportunities.

Program Description

The Western Montana Literacy Support Corps is a project of Women's Opportunity and Resource Development Inc. (WORD), a grassroots community-based organization located in Missoula, Montana. The main components of this project are designed to 1) meet the lack of available resources for staffing Family Resource Center parent involvement programs in small rural schools, and 2) address the difficulty in having parents and community members understand the importance of their involvement in children's education in partnership with schools to facilitate the achievement of high standards by all students. This project addresses the challenges faced by school districts working daily with families already compromised due to economic conditions, and often unaware of how important they are to their children's education.

Through the use of AmeriCorps members, schools and education-oriented community-based agencies have an opportunity to implement *parent* involvement programs through Family Resource Centers that meet the needs of teachers and families of school-aged children.

Family Resource Centers are driven by the community in which they are located. Literacy Support Corps members coordinate day-to-day operations of school-based Family Resource Centers outreach to parents, providing information and tools for parents to empower

themselves in support of their children's education. They recruit volunteers from within the school population and the surrounding community to partner with the centers in planning and facilitating ongoing programs. AmeriCorps members, with their leadership team of parents, students, educators, and community members, develop the Family Resource Center and its programs. They plan and facilitate literacy-based, parent-child learning activities. Members and their volunteers develop materials, identify resources, and educate the school community on issues of family literacy, basic needs, parenting, school safety, emergency preparedness and homeland security. Many Family Resource Centers offer parenting classes, clothing exchanges, human service referrals, classes on CPR and first aid, parent information sessions on school safety and security plans in case of local, state or national emergencies. Family activities around home preparedness, using kits available from FEMA, are offered to parents and community volunteers. Schools and agencies provide a team partner, either staff or volunteer, to team with each member for on-site planning. Overall supervision of the member is a joint effort of the building principal/agency director and WORD's Family Resource Centers program director, with technical assistance and training from a variety of community partners.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

With more than a decade of experience partnering with schools to develop parent involvement, WORD learned an important lesson which shapes this project: Using neighborhood volunteers and community resources solves common problems. Family Resource Centers reach out to surrounding neighborhoods, attracting resources for the benefit of students, schools and families. For example, an AmeriCorps member approached a local bank to partner with the Family Resource Center in weaving financial literacy throughout the center activities planned for parents and their children. Bank personnel worked with parent volunteers on three different activities at the school, fostering a long-lasting partnership between the families, school staff and neighborhood bank. These networks are strengthening learning as well as the social fabric of the community.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Rural communities, proud of self sufficiency, often are slow to trust "outsiders". Recognizing this, WORD seeks local leadership to introduce the program into communities. For example, a local non-profit agency, Kid's First, collaborates with WORD in the Bitterroot Valley south of Missoula and introduces the program to schools. Kids First assists in recruiting people of all ages and diverse backgrounds as potential AmeriCorps members, to achieve representation of a cross-section of the Bitterroot community. The overriding quality sought in applicants is the ability to listen to and communicate with diverse people. AmeriCorps applicants are interviewed by a team from WORD, Kid's First and the school principal. This method, although labor intensive, insures community acceptance and buy-in. The collaboration between WORD and Kid's First has also strengthened Kid's First standing in their community, attracting additional support for youth focused substance abuse prevention programs.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Volunteers are used to develop and strengthen community resources. For example, in small rural schools, volunteers may not be used due to the lack of management systems such as volunteer protocols, availability of training, and meaningful ways to integrate them into the school. AmeriCorps members at schools establish these systems resulting in a more active, engaged community.

Family Resource Centers in schools provide productive roles for parents and community volunteers, leading to not only healthy, successful students – but a healthy community as well. Sharing the responsibilities, challenges and success of educating our children demands an integrated approach. The tools offered through an AmeriCorps member placement start the process, building capacity for long-term results.

Potential for Replication

Program staff from LEARNS, a training and technical assistance provider to Corporation for National and Community Service programs located at the North West Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), have singled out this program as one of only two or three AmeriCorps projects nationwide working with parents as the primary focus in a school setting. No Child Left Behind legislation mandates parent involvement in education reform. Federal funds through Title I direct a percentage of federal funds be spent on parent involvement programs. Schools are motivated to partner with parents and communities to meet the educational needs of children.

Successes

The 21 Family Resource Centers facilitated huge gains in parent involvement at participating schools their first year. Centers logged 10,094 drop-in visits by parents, with one-fifth of those visits “first time” visits by a parent to a center. The members facilitated 910 parent-child learning activities, with more than 16,500 parents and 20,900 children in attendance. Each FRC published monthly newsletters/calendars calling attention to project activities, with over 79,000 distributed to students’ families. A record 1,290 community members logged over 3,531 hours of volunteer service in support of parent involvement and literacy at centers during the 2002-2003 school year. Other highlights from the first year include:

- 17 of the 20 participating schools were classified as Title I, connecting this Corps to families of high economic and academic need. 75% of members began their service already acclimated to the culture unique to their host site as they came from within the host site population they serve.
- The program far surpassed the number of volunteers projected (1290 vs. 36)!
- 19 of 22 members completed 76 hours of training, while 16 members completed over 100 hours. 100% of members demonstrated increased understanding and knowledge.
- 85% (17 of 20) of the school-based centers met the goal of 50% parents/students connecting to increased resources for academic success.
- In 14 out of 20 schools, 80% of all students had a parent attend at least one parent-child activity.

All members report at least one “success story” in monthly reports. Members coordinated activities such as RIF (Reading is Fundamental) book distributions at schools, parent-child book clubs, Literacy Luncheons and family science nights. They forged school-community partnerships with banks and credit unions to increase family financial literacy programs. Members coordinated community service opportunities for students and their families with activities such as making blankets for group homes and writing holiday greeting cards for distribution with food baskets and Meals on Wheels programs. Success stories are posted monthly in the WBRS “great stories” section of the APR report and also distributed to school administration.

Entered the third program year in fall 2004, 63% of the eligible AmeriCorps members returned to serve a second year with the Literacy Support Corps, describing it as “the best experience I’ve ever had.” 91% of host sites asked to continue participation. School principals and parents are the strongest and most vocal supporters of the work accomplished by Family Resource Centers and AmeriCorps.

MONTANA

Youth Engaged in Service (YES)

Focus: Environment
Issue Area: Service Learning

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

MontanaYES, a program of the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC), is a summer service-learning adventure for teens motivated to give back to their environment and community while learning employment and group skills, and experiencing the sense of self-value that comes from hard work. By allowing youth to give back to their community, they discover they can be part of a bigger solution to the community's problems. They also learn they become a better person by doing things that benefit others.

AmeriCorps crew leaders work with the MontanaYES participants to accomplish four primary goals:

- Cultivate the ethic of community and volunteer service. Every youth participates in rewarding service projects that introduce them to ways they can address community and environmental needs.
- Foster a hardy work ethic and enhance practical job skills. Challenging projects help the youth develop diverse employment skills and values.
- Develop the values, skills, and commitment to conserve the environment. Conservation projects, wilderness travel, and environmental education support youth's development as responsible stewards of the land.
- Nurture a positive attitude towards self and the crew. The intimate experience of working, learning, and creating as a member of a crew challenges youth to succeed by bringing their best qualities forward every day, on every project, with every person.

Program Description

"To do is to be." This Socratic proverb is the essence of MontanaYES. Society showers its youth with rhetoric about how to be good citizens, yet provides them with limited constructive avenues to be positively involved with their community. MontanaYES cultivates this *citizenship* in several ways. Firstly, participation on a crew requires that each young person act as an active citizen by fulfilling basic "crew community" functions – youth have roles such as tool maintenance or daily vehicle inspections. Each young person also contributes to daily group needs such as meal preparation and clean-up. Youth work side-by-side on projects and recognize the importance of cooperation and a strong work ethic in helping the crew succeed at challenging tasks.

Secondly, by allowing youth to give back to their community while developing employment skills, they discover they can be positive agents of change in their community. The youth work on diverse projects, including building trails in local, state or national parks and forests; constructing handicap accessible raised beds in community gardens; improving the facilities at the Humane Society; or collecting native seeds for restoration projects at Yellowstone National Park. These projects cultivate the feelings of pride and self-worth that come from completing challenging and meaningful projects of lasting benefit. Service projects help youth experience how they become a better person when serving others.

Seventy-two youth in five Montana communities serve 200 hours each during the twelve, five-week sessions offered each summer – for a total of 14,000 hours. Approximately 20% of those hours are reserved for education and recreation. Two AmeriCorps members lead each session. For nearly every participant, MontanaYES is their first work experience and their first extensive exposure to outdoor recreation and conservation. The experience ends with a day for resume writing and a celebration with families to reflect upon the young people's accomplishments.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Give adolescents the opportunity to do something meaningful that has a positive and lasting impact in their community, and they will show up – on time and prepared. This is the premise of the MontanaYES program. 78% of the youth who participated in the YES program reported they had an increased desire to volunteer in their community. A follow-up survey conducted three months later revealed that 76% had continued as volunteers, serving in Food Banks, Boys and Girls Clubs, high school Key Clubs, with Habitat for Humanity, and in school-sponsored recycling clubs. The YES program is a positive mechanism to introduce youth to the world of service.

95% of youth also reported improved attitudes about work, with 55% saying their attitude improved "a lot." 91% reported improved skills to resolve conflicts and work with people different from themselves. 84% shared they had a better attitude about conservation of the environment and felt they had improved skills to be a positive influence within a group.

In addition to the lasting impact on the youth, the projects the youth completed have lasting impacts. Consider that at the Lewis and Clark Caverns, Montana's first state park developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's, two teams of MontanaYES participants constructed three miles of new trail this last summer – a 30% increase in miles of trail at the park. Consider the viewing platform constructed at the Sulfur Hot Springs along the Missouri River in Great Falls where thousands of visitors will now be able to see and dip water from the springs where Lewis and Clark collected the healing waters that cured Sacajawea when she was deathly ill. Consider the stretch along Welcome Creek where the youth built a log fence and planted trees and shrubs to protect this wilderness stream from impacts by hikers. These are lasting impacts that will benefit the public and public lands for years to come.

Supporting Data

MCC has developed extensive data about the MontanaYES program. An anonymous household survey is conducted at the beginning of each of 12 sessions. This survey provides the program with information about household income, family size, parent education, and personal challenges faced by youth such as single parent families, learning disabilities, academic failures, lack of mentors, problems with juvenile justice, etc. This data is used to assess whether recruitment activities are effectively reaching the target

population of disadvantaged youth for whom the YES program is the exceptional hand-up. MCC also seeks feedback from every project sponsor regarding the youth crews' performance. Overall, greater than 92% of sponsors rate the quality of work completed and crew productivity as very good or outstanding.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

An essential characteristic of the MontanaYES program is its reliance on an extensive network of partnerships. Starting with dozens of local businesses and foundations that contribute nearly half the funding for the project, and continuing with the three dozen project partners that sponsor a crew on diverse projects, this varied group ensures a sustainable funding base for the program AND quality service experiences for the youth. Project sponsors range from small, nonprofit organizations that use a crew for a single day, to federal agencies, like the U.S. Forest Service, that hire a crew for a week.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The MontanaYES program is exceptional not for the number of volunteers generated (72 youth serving on 12 small crews) but for the extensive commitment of the youth. Each young person serves for approximately 200 hours over a five-week period during the summer. All in all, this results in over 14,000 hours of service to Montana communities. The legacy of these hours is broad and deep, as seen in the hiking trails in state parks, restored streams flowing from popular wilderness areas, improved structures for community organizations, cleaned up neighborhoods, and new neighborhood parks. Each of these young people continues the legacy of participation due to the positive and life changing experience of volunteer service in their community.

Potential for Replication

The MontanaYES program is an easily replicated model in the tradition of conservation corps. This tradition is to engage young people in meaningful work as members of a small crew where they can develop a range of life and work skills. Quality projects, enhanced with engaging education, and youth development activities implemented by qualified AmeriCorps members, are the key ingredients. Cash "Service Awards" sponsored by local businesses assist with recruitment of disadvantaged youth.

Successes

Started in three communities in 2002, and expanded to five in 2004, MontanaYES is demonstrating its impact on youth and community. The data collected from program evaluations is convincing. 91% of participants had a greater appreciation and interest in service activities. Of these, 70% indicated they planned to continue volunteering in their community. The evaluations also revealed that 92% felt valued and effective as a crew member, 64% felt they were better able to communicate with people different from themselves the result of the five-week experience, and 93% of youth reported learning useful job and work skills. Project sponsors also evaluated the crew performance, with nine out of ten rating the YES participants' productivity and quality of work as very good or outstanding.

Finally, the youth are evaluated by the AmeriCorps crew leaders weekly and they are given specific feedback to improve their performance. Comparing scores from the first week to the last week of the program reveals that 81% of the youth improved their performance by at least one point on a five-point scale across a range of standards (service, attitude, teamwork, work ethic, job skills, and environmental stewardship).

NEBRASKA

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) AmeriCorps

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Disabilities

Innovative Elements

- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI), a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, is dedicated to improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families. The Institute provides interdisciplinary, family-centered services and support for individuals with disabilities. These services include the development of new and innovative ways to promote inclusion of the individual in the community. Along these lines, the MMI AmeriCorps program was developed to further extend these services and has established two primary goals:

- To improve the lives of individuals with disabilities, and
- To promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into national service.

Program Description

MMI AmeriCorps members work throughout the Institute and in outreach clinics in rural Nebraska serving children and families with a variety of disabilities including autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and spina bifida. As a University Center of Excellence in Disabilities, MMI can afford AmeriCorps member development opportunities through the Institute's team approach to exploration and learning. Members receive extensive training in specific disability topics (types of disabilities, the movement toward inclusion, current legislation affecting the disabled community, etc.) as well as national service topics such as leadership and democracy. A strong emphasis is placed on recruiting individuals with disabilities to serve in the program.

For example, MMI AmeriCorps members will participate in direct (e.g., mentoring) and service support activities (e.g., reading curriculum development and intervention evaluation) for people with disabilities.

Additionally, MMI AmeriCorps is dedicated to promoting disability awareness through volunteer work outside the Institute. The 20 AmeriCorps members in the program will identify ways to enhance services offered in their community and recruit volunteers (the first year goal is to recruit 250 volunteers providing 2,500 hours of service) to assist in fulfilling the goals established for the program.

Innovation

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

MMI AmeriCorps members have been recruited to serve in the Omaha Metropolitan area and in underserved rural communities. MMI has established partnerships through their organization's outreach clinics in rural areas of the state including Columbus, Hastings, and Kearney, that will enable MMI to utilize members to improve the lives of people with disabilities in each of these areas. Within these communities, key agencies and schools have also been identified as sources of recruiting AmeriCorps members. Use of the State's Telehealth networking videoconferencing system allows members to remain connected to the Munroe-Meyer Institute and to other AmeriCorps team members between in-person activities.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

MMI AmeriCorps members have established a goal to recruit 750 volunteers to serve 7,500 volunteer hours during the three-year grant period. Members are responsible for identifying (as a team) the needs of the disabled community in their communities and organizing activities and resources to attempt to meet those needs, thus improving their own awareness of resources for disabled individuals as well as the volunteers that they recruit.

Potential for Replication

The MMI AmeriCorps program has strong potential for replication in other states and is affiliated with a national organization known as the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). MMI AmeriCorps Program Director, Dr. Joe Evans, serves on a number of committees and has extensive contacts throughout the United States as a member of the UCEDD. He has already spoken at national conferences about the replication of this program in other university sites similar to MMI.

Successes

Over the past two years, Munroe-Meyer Institute has been the recipient of external funding to support efforts to become an AmeriCorps program. In conjunction with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, MMI was a recipient of an AmeriCorps National Service Inclusion Project "mini-grant." More recently, MMI received a planning grant from the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, \$20,000 for a six-month planning period. These funds helped to achieve two goals: 1) increasing awareness and participation of individuals with disabilities in national and community service, and 2) developing a model program that utilizes AmeriCorps members to facilitate the integration of individuals with disabilities into their communities and into national and community service.

During the six-month period of the planning grant, the program coordinator attended monthly training sessions provided by the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission designed to assist potential sub-applicants with preparing an application. The program coordinator also received one-on-one technical assistance from Project STAR to develop their program objectives. As part of the planning grant training sessions the program coordinator conducted a two-hour training session on "Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National Service Programs." Additionally, the program coordinator participated in a peer exchange with the Personal Assistant Services [PAS] AmeriCorps program in Athens, Georgia to review an AmeriCorps program that was similar in their program design.

MMI was successfully awarded an AmeriCorps*State formula grant for 2004-05 program year; the program will receive 20 members.

MMI AmeriCorps has been recognized, through site visits by the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, for its effective development of key programmatic systems, the strong administrative support of the program by the Institute, the integration of the program into the Medical Center environment, and the Institute's generous provision of resources to the program.

NEVADA

Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Homeless Veterans

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans

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Program Mission and Goals

The Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans AmeriCorps Program addresses the human need of homelessness among military veterans. The mission of the Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans is the successful reintegration of homeless veterans. To fulfill its mission, the program strives to:

- Outreach to veterans living on the streets, camps, and other places not meant for human habitation, to provide referrals for services based on an assessment of their needs, to enable them to abandon life on the streets.
- Provide clinical support in the form of needs assessment, case management, sobriety support, life skills and other therapeutic groups within residential and treatment facilities to provide the necessary support for veterans to achieve independence through stable and permanent housing.
- Provide employment assistance to homeless veterans to help them rejoin the workforce by obtaining permanent employment, and to once again become productive citizens.
- Increase skills of members in areas of client interaction, to effectively bring homeless veterans off the streets, strengthen existing programs serving veterans, identify service gaps and develop new programs and services to meet the needs of those homeless veterans. The program also strives to enhance the professional and self development of members through high-quality training to prepare them for life after AmeriCorps.
- Expand capacity of programs for the homeless through recruitment of volunteers who will serve to break the cycle of homelessness through community service projects and program support activities at U.S. VETS at the Meadows as well as its partnering agencies, and through the development of new community partnerships.

Program Description

Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans AmeriCorps Program has provided safe, sober and clinically-supported housing, employment, and social services to over 1,500 homeless veterans in Las Vegas, NV since 2000. Each year, a team of 14 full-time AmeriCorps members are specially trained to assist staff to conduct homeless outreach on the streets of Las

Vegas and the surrounding rural desert where homeless people camp. Members perform assessments and make referrals for medical, psychiatric, addiction, housing and employment services to all homeless persons they contact. Homeless veterans are referred to the United States Veterans Initiative's Meadows Inn in Las Vegas where they can live in a structured therapeutic community, recover from mental, physical and emotional pain and master the skills necessary to obtain and retain successful employment. AmeriCorps members also facilitate groups for sober living, resume writing, interview and job skills and implement case management plans with partner government and community agencies.

AmeriCorps members also mobilize hundreds of homeless veterans annually to volunteer to implement special community service projects to help other homeless people on Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day and Fourth of July holidays. By fostering a sense of individual responsibility within a structured living environment, these AmeriCorps members establish trusting relationships with homeless veterans and provide hope for those who want to abandon life on the streets, begin the healing process and become integrated and productive members of society again.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

The Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans program strengthens the continuum of care for the homeless in southern Nevada. By maintaining and developing community partnerships, and identifying needs of the homeless to strengthen and implement services, greater capability to serve the homeless is made possible. Additionally, members design leadership projects to meet the specific needs of homeless veterans. For example, members have been involved in creating a therapeutic community at U.S. VETS at the Meadows by facilitating groups such as addiction studies, stress management, and finance management which give veterans the skills they need to reintegrate into society. Members have also hosted recreational activities to enhance the lives and self-esteem of these homeless veterans, a key component of recovery.



Supporting Data

The goal for this AmeriCorps program is to track an individual veteran's progress from the street into a program and through the system to ultimate independence. Successful performance is measured through data collection in the form of individual screening forms, referral tracking, and host site reports that indicate if the individual took the next appropriate step in stabilizing their lives, either by accepting referrals to services, remaining stabilized in housing, or obtaining employment. The program also tracks volunteer recruitment and the members' ability to generate additional service capacity within organizations through both short-term and sustaining projects. Data that documents this impact can be observed from the 2003-2004 Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans AmeriCorps program. Over the course of the 2003-2004 program year, 1,339 homeless individuals received outreach services and referrals to social service agencies from AmeriCorps members. 549 veterans received clinical support, and 90% of those were reported as remaining stable in their residency at U.S. VETS at the Meadows. 378 veterans received employment assistance in the form of skills assessments, resume and computer instruction, and interview skills and 156 of those veterans successfully obtained employment.

Potential for Replication

The United States Veterans Initiative began in 1993 with one National Direct AmeriCorps program in California, and has grown nationally through seven National Direct programs, two California state programs, and one state program in Nevada. These AmeriCorps programs were implemented and grown using the same model to serve homeless veterans. Their success in achieving outcomes and reintegrating homeless veterans demonstrates the potential replication of this program, as observed in the growth of other U.S. VETS AmeriCorps programs across the nation including California, Arizona, Texas, Hawaii, and Washington, D.C., serving a total of over 10,000 homeless veterans each year.

Successes

- 56 (14 each year) full-time AmeriCorps members have impacted the lives of over 1,500 homeless veterans since 2000.
- AmeriCorps members have established collaborative partnerships with dozens of government and community based social service agencies city wide.

Formerly homeless veterans who are now residing in programs of U.S. VETS at the Meadows are given opportunities to serve others by volunteering, which have proven to be effective in their own recovery. These veterans have been recruited to implement special community service projects benefiting others, including individuals who are homeless, on projects for Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day and Fourth of July holidays each year, as well as the annual Las Vegas Homeless Stand Down and the Homeless Veterans Stand Down. Examples of their roles in these projects include helping visually impaired clients of the Blind Center of Nevada in their craft and employment workshop, serving meals to the homeless on holidays, including delivering Thanksgiving dinner to the homeless on the streets. These veterans have also served other homeless individuals looking for assistance during Homeless Stand Downs – an event where the entire homeless population receives services from various homeless providers to offer one day of respite and encouragement for them to abandon life on the streets. Veterans, who once attended such Stand Downs seeking help, now volunteer alongside AmeriCorps members to offer much needed services such as shampooing hair, distributing hygiene packets and blankets and clothing, and directing homeless to service providers based on individual needs. These veterans have left the streets behind them and are now living productive lives. Through this innovative part of the Nevada Collaboration for Homeless Veterans AmeriCorps program, these veterans now have a shared sense of achievement and are not only helping themselves but also others, while acting as role models to the homeless veterans still living on the streets.

NEW JERSEY

Bonner Leaders Program

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Community Involvement

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

Campus and community leaders came together to address compelling needs of our society and created the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leaders Program (NJABLP). It is an innovative campus-based program housed at campuses in central New Jersey designed to integrate the goals of meeting community needs and inspiring college students to become committed and engaged citizens. The network has a united vision that seeks to strengthen the hand of community agencies by mobilizing the resources of the campus and impacting the campus culture.

Currently, more than 80 "Bonners" work on projects and initiatives that vary slightly from year to year. Current service objectives state that members will:

- increase literacy, academic skills, or engagement in learning of homeless and at-risk youth through afterschool, mentoring and enrichment programs;
- increase the amount of food delivered to individuals in need;
- increase the academic and vocational skills of low-income and homeless adults enrolled in educational programs of local soup kitchens;
- complete community-based research projects strengthening agencies' capacity;
- raise community awareness through on-site visits and/or presentations explaining issues related to poverty, public safety, etc.; and
- carry out intensive volunteer recruitment initiatives.

Program Description

The NJABLP trains a team of students from community and four-year, public and private, colleges and universities who serve as reduced-time members at community agencies. Each agency hosts a full- or half-time member who is recruited directly from the community and serves alongside the teams of student members.

Campus directors meet weekly with their corps to build skills necessary for effective service. Directors assess and reflect with each team as well as with members on their progress. All corps events bring students and community members together for trainings and seasons of service projects to create synergy and increase collegiality.

The program has three, mutually reinforcing components:

- providing service and enrichment activities for members;
- providing programs that help develop a culture of service at institutions of higher learning and infrastructures to engage the larger campus community; and
- providing a skilled and committed group of members who deliver basic services, build capacity, and initiate and support enrichment activities that agencies would otherwise not be able to provide.

The NJABLP expects students to build their current competency and skill sets and move closer toward achieving program benchmarks and student development goals. It approaches the member holistically, considering the variety of factors that influence their development. As a result, the developmental model aligns itself to a tiered undergraduate curricular experience.

As a campus-based program structurally congruent with the undergraduate experience, where possible the four-year calendar is integrated. Students have the option of enrolling for terms supported by an Education Award Bonner Leaders Program, or by additional institutional support allowing the program to take on larger initiatives supported by returning Bonner Leaders who have experience and a personal investment.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

In interviews with program alumni, directors, and partners, the following Common Commitments of Bonner Leaders were identified: social justice, civic engagement, spiritual exploration, diversity, international perspective, and community building. Bonner Leaders have the opportunity to explore each of these areas during their four-year experience. Members have gone to exciting careers in public service.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Agencies strive to offer effective programs that target community needs, and yet they are facing increasing competitiveness for funding. Funders have stiff requirements and few agencies have the human or financial resources to conduct the necessary research to regain funding. As universities seek relevant and innovative learning experiences for students, community-based research has emerged as a powerful and mutually beneficial mechanism for non-profits and campuses. The NJAPLP allows community agencies to work collaboratively with faculty and AmeriCorps members to produce needed evidence and build organizational capacity and sustainability.

For example, student-members at The College of New Jersey serving as mentors also worked with a faculty member to complete a report for the Trenton Youth Services Commission. A comprehensive report on non-school hour programming in the city and its impact on youth violence was produced, examining local programs and nationwide best practices. The report influenced the commission's funding and program strategies.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

This program has empowered local non-profits by allowing them to leverage the professional expertise of the faculty and to harness the energy of college students. As higher education continues to make student volunteerism a priority, NJABLP members have numerous venues to connect students to the initiatives of their partners.

For example, student-members at Rider University have organized an entire week of activities dedicated to raising awareness for local hunger relief initiatives, make more than ten recruitment presentations to campus organizations each semester, and have established four annual campus wide service events. They organize fundraising events and food drives.

Potential for Replication

Through a National Education Award Program, the Bonner Leader Program has been replicated by 77 colleges and universities in 25 states nationwide, and has partnered with more than 350 community organizations. This strong network provides New Jersey members with a larger framework for their service, and provides campus and community partners with a wealth of resources and best practice models.

Successes

For years, the NJABLP has surpassed its stated objects and provided community agencies with thousands of hours of service. New initiatives have been launched, advocates trained, hundreds of volunteers recruited, food goods delivered, young people empowered, and members have become confident and competent citizens committed to serving.

Community partners who were initially wary of becoming involved with the program now welcome NJABLP members, expecting and receiving high-quality service delivery. Members have also returned in successive years, indicating general satisfaction with the program and an eagerness to exercise their civic responsibility.

AmeriCorps' presence on each of the campuses has revolutionized the way the institutions value service. One of the goals of the NJABLP is to engage the wider campus culture to promote service. The program concentrates on recruitment of volunteers on campus and at community events. This has been a successful effort and the momentum continues to build as other students hear about the work to which the members are committed. During the 2003-2004 academic year, more than 850 non-AmeriCorps volunteers have been recruited and have completed more than 8,000 hours of service.

Campus partners have recognized powerful possibilities of program expansion. In order to provide more students with opportunity to serve, they have found creative ways to replicate the AmeriCorps experience. Each uses a different combination of work-study, private funding, grants, and other institutional support to put together a package for corps members. These packages provide students with a living allowance and a \$1,000 scholarship equal to what the official AmeriCorps members receive. These students also commit to 300 hours of service, training and reflection and serve alongside the AmeriCorps members to further the work of our community partners.

The NJABLP initiative began with campus and community leaders coming together on equal footing to forge a new vision of what campus and community partnerships can achieve. This spirit of collaboration has ensured a channel of communication in order to more effectively respond to the evolving needs of the community and help close the historical divide between campus and community. The highly collaborative nature of the NJABLP has provided space for community organizations and campuses to take part in the national service movement as well as to be true partners and co-educators.

NEW JERSEY

Bringing New Jersey Together

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: New Immigrant Assistance

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State

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Program Mission and Goals

Since its inception, the "Bringing New Jersey Together" Program has had one mission: to help the immigrant, refugee and asylum-seeking populations of New Jersey become self-sufficient members in their new homeland. The program accomplishes this mission by working with schools, community and faith-based organizations to:

- Assist immigrant clients to access mainstream human and healthcare services;
- Improve the academic performance of immigrant students; and
- Improve housing conditions.

Program Description

The International Institute of New Jersey is an 85 year-old non-profit organization located in Jersey City whose mission is to help people in transition from one society to another - especially those who have endured the ravages of war, persecution, and economic hardship. The organization provides a range of services designed to help newcomers and their families to become self-sufficient contributing members of American society with community assistance. Programs include the following: educational services; inter-group relations services; cross-cultural counseling; English literacy and skill training classes; training/consultative services; immigration law services; advocacy services; folk arts programming; interpreting/translation services; refugee resettlement; post-9/11 initiatives; and an Anti-Human Trafficking program.

The AmeriCorps program at the Institute has been operating since 1995, making it one of the oldest AmeriCorps programs in New Jersey. The program's motto of self-sufficiency stems from a belief that members should first support their clients and then teach them how to access services they need. Clients will then be able not only to help themselves but also to go back into their communities and serve others.

"Bringing New Jersey Together" is innovative in its holistic approach to helping eliminate the barriers newcomers face, but perhaps the most innovative aspect of the program is the members themselves. In essence, the AmeriCorps members are "Cultural Mentors" who reflect the culture and language of the clients, many of whom are new to this country.

Members assist the clients in all aspects of resettlement: from escorting, interpreting and advocating for them at social service and government agencies, such as the immigration office, to showing them the “how-to’s” of obtaining employment, housing, etc. The roles members play are diverse and crucial to meeting their clients’ basic needs.

In addition, a large component of the program is tutoring kids in the Jersey City and Clifton Public School Systems. Members serve English as a Second Language (ESL) students and also native speakers who are at risk of failure. The tutors concentrate primarily on first to third graders in an effort to assure that every child is on the way to literacy, although many of the tutors spend time tutoring remedial language skills to students in the upper grades.

Furthermore, members host a housing project where they visit run-down apartment buildings in an effort to encourage landlords to maintain the property according to New Jersey housing law. Of particular concern is that tenants who are new to this country are unaware that they have rights and are afraid to speak up for fear of retribution.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

To truly understand why this program has a lasting impact, it is important to describe the clients; many are people who have been subjected to trauma and torture. Some are survivors of torture, others are victims of human trafficking, and still more are African refugees who have left war-torn countries, many leaving family behind. Many immigrants are eager to learn English in an effort to leave their factory jobs and pursue the professions they studied for back home. Members interact with their clients at a very important, transitional time as clients begin to forge their identity as new Americans. The support and “know how” that members give their clients allows newcomers to successfully manage that transition. Without that support, many would find the adjustment to the U.S. bewildering and frightening.

Successes

In terms of outcomes, the program has achieved much success. Last year members tutored 435 students who reported a 60% improvement rate, served 3,547 clients, and visited 271 tenants. In all three areas, the program surpassed its service goals. In addition, they have served 746 clients, thus far, and are close to meeting their goal of 1,500. They have already tutored 396 students, surpassing their target goal of 200 students.

NEW MEXICO

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Community Needs/ Member Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, an innovative AmeriCorps program, is dedicated to teaching youth and young adults about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society and for the common good. RMYC strives to:

- Instill a deeper understanding of citizenship and educate members to become active and responsible participants in our society.
- Offer challenging learning experiences designed to foster the skills and attitudes that lead to becoming productive members of society.
- Teach youth to respect, protect and preserve the community and foster the development of leadership skills.
- Cultivate maturity, self-efficacy, self-esteem and an attitude of responsibility to self and to the whole.
- Provide outstanding leadership in the area of national youth service in Taos County.
- Build strong community partnerships to solve local problems.

Program Description

RMYC's goal is to foster within members the value of service, importance of continued involvement in the community, and attachment to the principles of freedom and equality on which our nation rests. Members enhance their ability to plan effective service projects that respond to local community needs, and work on projects such as literacy tutoring, reforestation, and public safety projects where they learn valuable lessons of teamwork, responsibility, and meeting a challenge head-on.

In Taos County, 33% of children are classified as living in poverty. Unemployment levels are double the national average. 68% of Taos County public land is managed by federal or state agencies. Due to budget cuts, local agencies have not been able to address the ecological needs that extensive use of these lands has caused. A century of fire suppression and unsustainable logging have made the forestlands at risk for erosion and destructive wildfire damage.

Members provide one-on-one afterschool and in-school mentoring, with a priority on assisting students in need of remediation in the core literacy competencies.

Members also run a Summer Service Camp, which engages the children in organized non-competitive play, community service, team building initiatives, and recreational and educational field trips.

Members complete significant community service projects in the areas of public safety and the environment, including land management and environmental restoration projects. Members improve trails, remove brush and thin trees in fire-prone areas, maintain public parks, restore native fish habitats, restore and preserve historic sites, and provide safe public use walkways for recreational use. Members also restore and improve the condition, safety, energy-efficiency and accessibility of homes of low-income families and of public facilities.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) has had a profound and positive impact upon the more than 355 AmeriCorps members enrolled in the program since 1997, on the more than 1,000 students they have reached in the Taos School District, on project partners, on hundreds of community members who have volunteered, and on the community. The Corps continues to provide outstanding leadership in the area of national youth service in Taos County, the federal enterprise community it serves.

RMYC has been referred to as a model AmeriCorps program in the state and as a pioneer in positive youth development and service-learning. It is one of four national sites in the Constitutional Rights Foundation's 1999 Project Next Step, and a Points of Light Foundation/Partnership for National Service grantee. Because of its reputation for excellence, RMYC enjoys strong community support and is able to leverage funds, including state and tribal contracts.

Supporting Data

During the 2002-2003 program year, 24 Field Program Members and Education Award Only Members provided 19,640 hours of service and 289 volunteers gave 893 hours of service; 65 Education Program Members and associated Education Award Only Members provided 36,896 hours of service and 279 volunteers gave 875 hours of service. RMYC utilizes a variety of qualitative and quantitative tools to measure outcomes for their objectives, including the Work Performance Assessment, Partner/Project Sponsor Questionnaire forms, internship evaluations, interviews with crew supervisors, verbal and written self-reporting, and member journals.

Data collected confirms the value and support for individuals engaged in the program. Satisfaction surveys affirm the positive outcomes for persons served. A daily journal maintained by each member provides documentation of personal growth gained from their journey as AmeriCorps service members.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Building strong community partnerships to solve local problems is a key part of RMYC's mission. As the only year-round youth corps in New Mexico, the Corps collaborates with over 100 partners including schools, service agencies and government agencies to perform a wide range of vital educational, human needs, environmental, public safety and homeland security services. Partners include Ranchos Elementary School, Taos Pueblo, Mother Anna's Homeless Shelter, El Pueblito Methodist Church, Ancianos Center, BLM, Carson National Forest, Community Wellness Council, and Community Against Violence.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

RMYC actively supports and encourages citizens in volunteering. AmeriCorps members work closely with RMYC staff to identify areas where they can provide additional service or encourage others to invest in service and volunteerism. These programs bring people with needs together with people who are knowledgeable of resources. Through effective use of volunteers in their programs, members learn about the importance of the volunteer sector. Therefore, recruiting, utilizing and maintaining a strong volunteer base has become an integral part of the program. RMYC uses member-driven outreach to schools, non-profits, and civic and faith-based groups to recruit volunteers. The Corps' application identifies volunteer interests, experience and schedule of availability and allows for placement in needed areas. RMYC has a designated Volunteer Coordinator responsible for planning various volunteer recognition events, including Volunteer of the Month, an annual Volunteer Recognition event, and volunteer and staff attendance at the NM State Commission for Community Volunteerism's Spotlight on Volunteers.

Potential for Replication

The innovative strategies demonstrated by the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps offer great potential for replication. RMYC supports the integration of Youth Corps with community needs that exist throughout the nation. Communities that support Youth Corps services will find the RMYC program model complimentary to their goals and services.

Successes

Student Grade Assessment Sheets collected from teachers indicate an 82% increase in grades of students who receive tutoring. There is a 66% increase in reading, a 70% increase in math skills, a 40% increase in writing skills, a 15% increase in spelling. There was an increase of 55% in getting their homework in on time. In one After School Tutoring (AST) crew it was reported that all students showed some benefit in better grades, and in total these students experienced a total of 36 grade increases. Four students improved by 7 grades or more with an average increase of 3.66 grades per student. During the program year, Service Learning Corps members provided 8,610 hours of service to students, parents, and teachers. 100% of service-learning was rated as excellent or better during the program year. In Middle School Service Learning over 200 students were served and 337 students served in AST.

Student outcomes from this year as reported by teachers include:

- A 13.6% drop in middle school students involved in aggressive activities;
- A 12.6% increase in middle school students thinking critically and making healthy choices regarding risk taking;
- Students participating in the Service Learning Program had a 5% increase in participation in school social activities over the control group;
- Teachers reported an 80% decrease in hyperactivity in elementary students;
- Teachers reported a 17% decrease in learning problems in elementary students; and
- Teachers reported a 34% decrease in behavior problems in elementary students.

Even though students at the middle school perceived that drugs were more available to them at the end of the year, students served by the Service Learning crew had significant reductions in drug and alcohol usage. Tobacco use dropped 92%, alcohol use dropped 54.9%, and marijuana use dropped 28.8%.

NEW MEXICO

VSA AmeriCorps Team

Focus: Unmet Human Needs

Issue Area: Disabilities

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

VSA arts of New Mexico, an innovative AmeriCorps program, supports collaboration between people with and without disabilities in service to their community. VSA strives to:

- Create awareness of the positive potential of people with severe disabilities to become engaged citizens of their community.
- Develop and implement health, safety and first response to emergencies training for adults with cognitive disabilities.
- Develop training materials and activities for adults with cognitive disabilities supporting responsible citizenship.
- Promote problem solving and risk taking, self-confidence and self-esteem, all of which contributes to success in academic, employment and community environments. Dance contributes to increased self-confidence, persistence, social tolerance and appreciation of individual and group social development.
- Recruit and engage diverse AmeriCorps members with and without disabilities to collaborate in service to their community.

Program Description

VSA arts of New Mexico is a strong and viable organization. It is an affiliate of VSA arts Home Office in Washington, D.C. with support from the Department of Education and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. VSA NM is also accredited by CARF, the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and serves as a community service provider on contract through the Developmental Disabilities Waiver Program of the New Mexico Department of Health.

VSA AmeriCorps direct service activities benefit children and adults with severe disabilities and at-risk youth. Outreach activities focus on three elementary and two high school programs, all serving at-risk youth and/or children with severe disabilities.

VSA's AmeriCorps program recruits members with and without disabilities to perform service activities that bring the arts and education about disability to children who otherwise do not have those opportunities. Hundreds of young people have the opportunity to see

people with disabilities in a new light through public presentation and weekly service projects.

Everyone that comes in contact with the VSA AmeriCorps team is exposed to the positive potential inherent when people with and without disabilities collaborate together in community service. The team is diverse and makes positive contributions to the Albuquerque community, strengthening the ties that bind.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

VSA arts of New Mexico's program builds upon the strengths of individuals and the community. The VSA AmeriCorps program focuses on volunteer program development and diverse community outreach to promote the development of an ethic of service among all members and service recipients that has the potential to last a lifetime.

Supporting Data

Data collected from teachers and students at collaborating school sites provide continuous feedback on the accessible approach to the arts used by VSA AmeriCorps members. Each year VSA strives to respond to increasing requests for services from new school and community partners.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

VSA has developed and sustained creative partnerships through formal agreements with five sites. Partnerships continue with the Albuquerque Public Schools, DLD Sycamore School at Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Keshet Dance Company, the University of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque's Therapeutic Recreation Programs.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Another innovative aspect of the VSA program model is the recruitment of diverse AmeriCorps members and volunteers with and without disabilities. AmeriCorps members themselves are a resource to the community. All members are encouraged to act as volunteers for events such as the March of Dimes Walk-A-Thon, the Special Olympics Summer Games and Make A Difference Day. AmeriCorps members assist VSA's volunteer efforts by mentoring program participants with severe disabilities as they volunteer in diverse community settings. Corps members also assist recruiting, and support the management of volunteers from other VSA programs.

Potential for Replication

The innovative strategies demonstrated by the VSA arts of New Mexico program offer great potential for replication. VSA supports the integration of community mental and disability health systems that exist throughout the nation. Communities that support inclusion of people with disabilities will find the VSA program model complimentary to their goals and services.

Successes

Individuals receiving mentoring were able to engage in community activities including attendance at Native American Pueblo Feast Day celebrations, visits to the zoo, museums

and other cultural activities, and work on community murals as well as individual art projects at the North Fourth Art Center.

Teacher evaluations included the following comments: "When we began dancing the students would shy away. We gained more than the goals I set. Self esteem increased and the students were able to perform a dance. Students shared the joy of music and dance." "Our classroom really enjoyed and looked forward to the class." "[My students gained] large motor skill development, self-esteem, enjoyment of the arts, respecting personal space and following direction." "Our girls received skills in movement, organization of space and worked in a team setting. Our students enjoyed the dance class and realized that they could participate and become successful dancers with different movement styles. [They] increased their self-esteem and learned team activities."

Members without disabilities maintained journals of their outreach experiences. One of those journals commented on the interactions between participants and the volunteers and members with disabilities: "Tammy, KP, Laura and I were teaching 5th grade gifted class at Wherry Elementary. We were choreographing their 'big production'. They were all very nervous and a bit hesitant to try new moves. When it came time for two of the students to try their new choreography they both got very nervous and didn't want to try it in front of the class. So we had Laura and KP team up with them. We took them off to the side and had them practice it together. It took awhile, but before the end of the class they were performing it for the class. KP and Laura were fantastic mentors. When they (the students) saw them dancing they realized that they could do it too!" Anecdotal evidence abounds that through modeling, the dancers with disabilities helped break down the shyness of students and encourage them to be engaged. For their part, the dancers with developmental disabilities gained self-confidence (as evidenced by their growing willingness to lead activities) in their potential as leaders and teachers for children without disabilities.

NEW YORK

Harlem Children's Zone

Focus: Education
Issue Area: School Readiness/ Support

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

In the Harlem Children's Zone AmeriCorps program, members, called Peacemakers, play a critical role in a comprehensive, community building initiative, the Harlem Children's Zone Project that creates positive opportunities and outcomes for 6,800 children who live in a 60-block area of Central Harlem (from 116th Street to 132nd Street and from Madison Avenue to Eighth Avenue). The Harlem Children's Zone AmeriCorps Program focuses on:

- Developing life skills and school readiness;
- Increasing School Success; and
- Recruiting and managing Volunteers.

Program Description

AmeriCorps members at Harlem Children's Zone provide children with critical services and supports that begin at birth and continue until graduation from college. Members are assigned to five HCZ programs: The Baby College, Harlem Gems, School Success, TRUCE, and Job Center for Youth.

At *The Baby College*, a weekly program, members work with HCZ staff and child development experts to provide 180 parents of children age 0-3 with the latest information on child development and parent-training based on a curriculum developed by Dr. T. Berry Brazelton. Members assist with outreach and recruitment, support parent-training workshops, and provide on site childcare. With the help of AmeriCorps members, 80% of the parents of 0-3 year old children in the HCZ have graduated from Baby College.

Harlem Gems, HCZ's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program, provides children with a high quality, year-round, extended day (8 AM to 6 PM) early childhood education experience. Members provide in-class early childhood education activities (8 AM to 3 PM) and extended day services (3 PM to 6 PM). For two consecutive years, the program has enabled 100% of its children to attain school readiness (as measured by the Bracken Scale) despite being significantly behind when they began the program.

In *School Success*, members are placed in six public schools in Central Harlem. Members contribute conflict resolution/mediation services during "transition periods"

(breakfast, recess, lunch, dismissal) where most school violence takes place; support classroom teachers in providing instruction; read to individual children and small groups; provide tutoring and recreational activities after school; recruit and organize parent involvement activities; and provide tutoring and academic enrichment during the summer. Members work with children in SMART, a computerized reading program, which provides each child with a reading diagnostic, an individualized reading plan, and regular progress reports. Members have also played a critical role in helping to screen HCZ school children for asthma, vision and hearing problems, and obesity. Through the efforts of the Peacemakers, HCZ demonstrated that 28% of Harlem children had asthma, far exceeding the national rate of 4-6%.

At TRUCE, HCZ's youth development through media literacy and the arts program, members provide tutoring, support media projects, arts projects, community service activities and college preparation activities. For three years in a row, over 90% of TRUCE high school seniors were accepted to college, receiving over \$1 million in scholarships. At the *TRUCE Fitness and Nutrition Center*, members insure that youth have regular physical exercise and learn the important health issues affecting the Harlem community. Members test participants on the President's Challenge and organized the first annual HCZ Summer Olympics in which over 500 youth and volunteers participated. At the *Job Center for Youth*, members work with young people who are in danger of dropping out of high school. They provide the tutoring, counseling, and support these students need to stay in school, graduate, and have a successful first job experience.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

AmeriCorps members develop an understanding of civic responsibility and the spirit of community through the following activities:

- Working with teachers and parents in under-performing schools to improve reading performance to meet NCLB standards.
- Working with parents, community residents, leaders, clergy, staff, and volunteers in the schools, housing, parks, churches, and gardens of the HCZ to build a community that promotes positive outcomes for children.
- Working at HCZ Project Programs to provide critical supports and services to children and families.
- Training that fosters knowledge, skills, and attitudes on volunteerism, community service, and democracy.

The HCZ Peacemaker program has a lasting impact on the Central Harlem community because it allows community residents to:

- Learn about HCZ's network of services and supports. The HCZ network offers programs to children and families from birth to adulthood.
- Become aware of the positive supports and services that HCZ's Peacemakers are providing in schools and in the community.
- Participate in volunteer activities with Peacemakers, community and faith-based organizations, and corporate partners throughout the year.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

Through the HCZ Peacemaker Program, AmeriCorps members work directly with community residents, parents, churches, hospitals, other community-based organizations, and corporations to build a community in Central Harlem that supports the safe, healthy development of children. AmeriCorps members work in HCZ's early childhood programs to give parents in Harlem access to the latest information on child development and parenting.

In the HCZ public schools, members work with teachers, principals and parents to make schools safer places for children and to provide children with the supports and services they need to meet or exceed city, state and federal standards in reading. AmeriCorps members work with the HCZ Faith Based Network, a group of 12 churches and mosques; with the HCZ Community Advisory Board (CAB), comprised of 48 community residents; and with corporate volunteers from General Electric, Lehman Brothers, American Express and Viacom on a variety of neighborhood beautification projects. In 2004, members began working to support the development of HCZ Promise Academy Charter School, a new charter school that HCZ believes will dramatically change the way children are educated in Harlem and similar communities.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The HCZ Peacemaker program encourages AmeriCorps members to engage in community service, including block cleanups, painting murals, and health fairs. In 2003-2004, 98 full-time and 32 part-time members worked with community residents and over 500 corporate volunteers to perform 60 community service projects.

Potential for Replication

After continuous request from organizations wanting to learn about HCZ's comprehensive community building strategy, HCZ developed the Practitioners Institute. The goal of the Practitioners Institute is to educate organizations on HCZ's work and strategies to replicate it in other communities. The Peacemaker replication model outlines how volunteerism, community service, and the active participation of community organizations, residents, and corporate volunteers are key components of HCZ's community building strategy.

Successes

The Harlem Children's Zone has often exceeded their Performance Measures. For example, to continue the expansion of the project in New York City's Central Harlem, during the grant period of 2003, the Harlem Children's Zone recruited and trained 98 full-time and 32 part-time AmeriCorps members. These members have worked to extend the reach of program activities in Central Harlem.

The program has developed effective strategies for recruiting and managing volunteers. In 2003 HCZ exceeded their goal of recruiting 500 volunteers. Volunteer projects have resulted in the painting of public hallways and apartments in city-owned buildings, classrooms, gyms, hallways and other public spaces in schools, the building of playgrounds and the refurbishing of community gardens.

As part of the strategy of early and progressive intervention, HCZ's long-term goal is to serve 80% of 0-2 year old children in the targeted Harlem area. Last year's goal was to reach 59% of 0-2 year olds. In 2003, the program exceeded their goal of having 180 parents complete a nine-week semester at Baby College. In just three years, AmeriCorps members have enabled the program to achieve the goal of having 80% of the attending parents graduate Baby College. The Baby College has graduated 339 parents in six cycles. The parents have 486 children (this figure does not include children not yet born during Baby College). As of 2002, 269 parents have been pre-tested and post-tested using Philliber-designed surveys. The tests show a measurable increase in knowledge about immunizations, parenting practices, and health services.

In 2003, 100% of the children attending Harlem Gems scored average or above average on the post-test test of the Bracken Scale, a normed test of school readiness, thus exceeding the goal stated in the 2003-04 performance measure.

NORTH CAROLINA

AmeriCorps Cross Cultural Education Service Systems (ACCESS)

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: New Immigrant Services

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The goals of the AmeriCorps Cross Cultural Education Service Systems (ACCESS) are to:

- Provide information and referral services to residents of immigrant communities for basic needs including health care, employment, crime control, and education;
- Provide interpretation, translation, and transportation for immigrants in target communities to enable them to access human services;
- Provide disaster relief training to immigrant communities and direct immigrant disaster relief intervention as needed in cooperation with state and local officials;
- Train members in CPR, conflict resolution, cross cultural communication, and citizenship education leading to a UNCG credential in Cross Cultural Human Services;
- Train bilingual members in professional interpretation skills leading to a certification in professional health and human services interpretation;
- Train and prepare members in career development leading to future employment and ongoing commitment to service;
- Establish and maintain volunteer management programs with AmeriCorps partner agencies;
- Support and establish local advisory committees for providers to assist in the provision of culturally appropriate services for refugee and immigrant communities; and
- Develop and provide cultural awareness and competency activities for immigrant and mainstream communities in target areas.

Program Description

AmeriCorps ACCESS (AmeriCorps Cross Cultural Education Service Systems) is a project of University of North Carolina-Greensboro's Center for New North Carolinians (CNCN). Affiliated with the Department of Social Work at UNCG, AmeriCorps ACCESS became the foundation for the newly created UNCG Center for New North Carolinians in 2000. The AmeriCorps ACCESS Project was created 1994 in response to overwhelming needs of immigrants who have resettled in the state over the past 10 years. The 2000 census showed that North Carolina had the fastest growth of Hispanics of

any state in the nation, a 450% increase over the last decade. The overall mission of ACCESS is to help refugees and immigrants and their communities gain better access to human services, build bridges of understanding with their neighbors, and become economically self-sufficient state residents. AmeriCorps members are placed with partner organizations across the state that share common goals. Specific service descriptions are developed at each site in response to the needs of the community.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Several dozen program alumni have completed graduate degrees in human services-related fields and hold professional positions in human service agencies and faith communities across the state. ACCESS helps nurture the development of new nonprofits. Six partner organizations began with the placement of an AmeriCorps member. Over time they developed their own boards, funding bases, and nonprofit status, and have become independent partner organizations of the AmeriCorps ACCESS project. ACCESS offers program and resource development consultation as part of its service to these organizations. In 2003, nine new faith-based or grassroots organizations were added to the ACCESS partner organizations.

Supporting Data

In addition to internal and external documentation and reporting systems, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors authorized establishment of the UNCG Center for New North Carolinians in 2000, to be built upon the AmeriCorps ACCESS Project programming, to serve as a statewide university resource for training, outreach, and research regarding immigrants in the state.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The thirty local nonprofit partner organizations who serve as AmeriCorps ACCESS partner sites include grass roots immigrant communities, faith-based communities, mainstream human service agencies, public schools, health providers, and public libraries. State and local agencies use ACCESS members as linkages to immigrant communities.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

ACCESS has been exceptionally successful in identifying social capital within immigrant communities, organizing those resources for community service, and matching them up with mainstream volunteer initiatives.

Potential for Replication

Communities dealing with dramatic demographic shifts need new paradigms and structures to accommodate the changing population and address changing needs. Other states that have large, new immigrant populations can replicate this by building upon the strengths and goodwill of the newcomers, connecting them with mainstream organizations, and develop community collaboration through the community service and community strengthening activities of an AmeriCorps program.

Successes

In that over half of the members are bilingual or multilingual, the largest service members provide to immigrants is translation services. In 2003, members provided interpretation

services 26,500 times to over 8,834 people, and information and referrals 29,000 times to over 9,500 people. In focus groups, an average of 90% of people served reported a significant improvement in being able to access needed services as a result of member interpreter service activities.

Members conduct disaster preparedness outreach to immigrant and refugee communities, translate disaster preparedness educational materials into Spanish, French, Arabic, Serbo-Croatian, Vietnamese, Rhade/Jarai, Portuguese, and Russian, and provide immigrant and refugee disaster relief such as interpreting at emergency shelters and on emergency hotlines.

A "great story" from the related CNNC program, Immigrant Health ACCESS Project, illustrates the impact a member made during an ice storm in 2002, that left millions of North Carolina residents without power for days.

"Our PT Arabic lay health advisor Hamid and his wife Nafisa, a PT member at Lutheran Family Services, saved the lives of an entire Sudanese family. During the power outage, a newly-arrived Sudanese family had been heating their home with a gas stove. The family members (none of whom speak English) all began to feel ill. Not knowing what to do, they called Hamid. He and Nafisa went over to the family's home to see what was wrong. When they arrived all of the family members were bordering on unconscious - the wife was still holding the phone from when she called Hamid. Because the members had been involved in disaster preparedness training, Nafisa knew what the problem was. They called 911 and opened the doors and windows. EMS arrived and took everyone to the emergency room. The paramedics said that had Hamid and Nafisa not taken action, all family members would have been dead within 10 minutes."

Members receive a credential in cross-cultural human services through the UNCG Department of Social Work. Bilingual members are certified as interpreters through the UNCG Interpreter ACCESS project. Over 75% of the members fulfill the training requirements to receive the credential in cross-cultural services.

Members establish classes and information sessions on citizenship and the permanent residency process; establish classes and tutoring sessions for improving English Language skills; and provide referrals to existing resources in the community. In 2003, members served over 4,800 people and over 75% increased their knowledge of citizenship and the English language as measured by focus groups.

OHIO COMCorps

Focus: Health and Public Safety

Issue Area: Community Health

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

In the heart of Ohio Appalachia, the COMCorps program, administered by Ohio University, is working hard to increase the levels of health and wellness in Athens County. Program objectives have been designed and refined to meet the county's needs by promoting health, preventing disease, and improving access to medical care. Specific objectives include the following:

- Decrease school absences by providing twice-yearly comprehensive school lice screenings and education for families with lice infestation in all Athens County Schools.
- Assist with immunization outreach, staff support and compliance in schools and in the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine Community Service Programs Childhood Immunization Program in order to reach the goal of completely immunizing 90% of all children by age two.
- Increase health education opportunities for children and adults in areas related to lifestyle choices such as tobacco, exercise, personal safety and nutrition.
- Increase opportunities for children and families to access dental care by providing them with resource information and transportation assistance.
- Increase opportunities for children and families to access medical care by providing them with Healthy Start resource information and application assistance.

Program Description

COMCorps began in August 2000. The five areas of concentration have been; dental health, immunizations, infectious diseases of childhood, lice infestations, and the Ohio Insurance Program for Children (Healthy Start). The need for this programming is well documented in multiple community health assessments and in formal observations by health and education professionals. Although gains have been made through efforts by COMCorps, the immunization rate of children by age two has improved but still remains well below the goal of 90%, the rate of people underinsured and uninsured is at about 40%, and public health education and school health education need to be more available and consistent (no school nurses are available in two of the five school systems served).

COMCorps members serve in all five school systems

within the county, providing health education and medical screenings, including vision and lice. Members also serve in partner health agencies throughout the county, planning and providing health outreach activities. Areas include Healthy Start and dental health outreach, transportation to medical appointments, environmental health issues, and nutrition and food security issues.

Because of the unique nature of the services provided by COMCorps, members apply from all parts of the country. Most of COMCorps' members are college graduates and many are preparing to enter medical school, either at Ohio University or elsewhere. Members are highly trained (minimum two week orientation) prior to entering service in the community. COMCorps has an average retention rate of approximately 95% during its three years of operation and many members are either hired by their placement agencies or continue on to medical school.

COMCorps is embraced and greatly supported by the Athens community. Even in the midst of huge TANF cuts and school funding cuts, COMCorps partners found a way to continue their partnerships and match contributions.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

COMCorps members are educated, highly trained, and most are committed to the field of healthcare in their future careers. Members have successfully bridged the gap between the resources of Ohio University and the needs of the impoverished and underserved Athens County community. Members provide a wide range of outreach and health services and perform a wide variety of services in order to meet the needs of their clients. For example, three COMCorps members volunteered to work with physically and mentally disabled students from Nelsonville Schools. Twice each week these members take time from their regularly scheduled assignments to work with these disabled students. Members enable these students, who otherwise very rarely get out of their wheelchairs for any type of physical activity, to participate in pool therapy.

Supporting Data

Data assessment tools confirm that students are gaining knowledge of the health topics presented as a result of pre- and post-test scores. The number of children receiving health screenings and health information continues to exceed the anticipated goal. The number of families receiving health access assistance has also exceeded the goal. The rate of retention of first-year members for a second year in the program has been 20-33%. The only site that has ended a partnership arrangement did so due to budget cuts.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

COMCorps is a partner with all five school districts in Athens County as well a partner of a diverse group of social and health agencies (such as the Red Cross, Athens County MRDD, City of Athens Health Department, Children Services, etc.). Although the schools and agencies have faced tremendous cuts in their own operating budgets, all remain committed to partnering with COMCorps and its untiring efforts towards better health and healthcare in Athens County.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Several sites have provided a wealth of non-member volunteers. These volunteers help extend the reach of various programs in areas such as blood drives, providing service at a

partner site working with displaced families, and assisting with school health screenings. There have been several non-member volunteers that have gone on to become COMCorps members.



Potential for Replication

The unique community in which COMCorps serves, Athens County, is a very poor and very undereducated area experiencing numerous problems in health and health care. Although Ohio University and Ohio University Osteopathic Medical School are located within the county, the general health of the citizens and access to healthcare has been well below the national average. COMCorps has been a valuable vehicle to reach out beyond the university to help citizens

gain access to healthcare, educational and preventative health services, and improved health and quality of life. The strategies used by COMCorps can be utilized and replicated in areas with similar community health problems.

Successes

COMCorps operated as a Planning Grant 1999-2000 and successfully became an operational program in 2000-2001. During three and one-half years as an operational program, COMCorps has achieved the following:

- Immunized over 20,000 children and adults with an average 16% increase in immunizations given to children ages 0 to 12.
- Conducted over 28,000 screenings for lice. Lice infestations dropped in each school district an average of 40% in positive lice cases.
- Healthy Start information was distributed throughout Athens County. As a result, 600 families enrolled in the Healthy Start Insurance Program.
- Members participated in training an average of 100 training hours per year. Training included CPR certification and Appalachian Culture Awareness.
- Members generated 1,419 volunteers resulting in 20,368 volunteer hours to the community.
- Innovative Community Service Projects promoting wellness and healthcare throughout the county such as "Health Fairs", "Wear Red Day" and "Butt Out."

OKLAHOMA

Serve for Success

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Rural Education

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

Serve for Success is an intermediary organization for various small, secular and faith-based partners in rural northwest Oklahoma. Serve for Success program goals are:

- Serve for Success members provide tutoring, enrichment and recreational activities for children and youth. This program reaches out to financially strained school systems in order to create and expand before school, afterschool, and summer school programs.
- Members serving in the partner school districts receive training in mentoring and tutoring, and are then guided by classroom educators in meeting the specific academic and social needs of underachieving students on a daily basis.
- Serve for Success has increased the opportunity for recreational and educational programs for children and youth in a highly underserved region.

More service opportunities have enticed numerous individuals to make a habit of volunteerism. Serve for Success has taken a step toward the future of rural America, proving that working together and sharing resources not only benefits small communities, but also the citizens that inhabit these communities.

Program Description

Serve for Success is based in Okeene, a small community of 1,258 located in rural Northwest Oklahoma. There are numerous communities in the surrounding area that are similar in size and scope. Because these communities have limited resources, Serve for Success acts as an intermediary for the school districts within a 45-mile radius. Rather than buildings and malls between sites, there are wheat fields and farms. These small communities differ from metropolitan areas in the fact that they do not have access to organizations such as Kids Inc., YMCA or United Way. Programs such as summer league baseball and soccer are provided through volunteers in each community.

This past year, 28 Serve for Success members were placed at various sites in three surrounding communities. Eight of the members were placed at sites in Okeene. One full-time member and five

summer, or 300-hour, members serve the Town of Okeene. The other 20 members serve at seven partner sites at a distance of 16 to 45 miles from Okeene. The school systems have found the Town of Okeene to be a superb neutral site to coordinate this program.

Research conducted through Oklahoma State University and Leadership Oklahoma has found that in order for small communities to thrive and some to survive, they must collaborate and pool their resources. This program is a prime example of how rural communities can pull together to provide the resources needed to implement these vital services.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Serve for Success (SFS) members are native to the partnering communities, and are very much a stable part of each community. Because of the education award and the vast experience gained while serving, this program gives citizens who otherwise may not have an opportunity, a chance to further their education and better themselves. It has provided several members the luxury of paying off student loans in two short years. They now have the option of putting more dollars back into their communities because they have lessened their financial burden. SFS holds member training in the highest regard because the program is training community members who will remain in the community and continue serving for many years to come. SFS has the opportunity to make better citizens and in turn create better communities.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

SFS, or the Town of Okeene, acts as an intermediary by placing AmeriCorps members in school districts and communities that could not financially afford or administratively sustain the grant requirements and responsibilities by themselves. These rural communities have numerous unmet service needs. The assistance of two or three members at one site can have a significant impact in the lives of those they serve.

One school district had an organized summer school program. SFS has provided the ability for two more districts to add summer programs. The superintendent of the Fairview Public Schools has seen his dream of a 'Rec and Read' summer program come to life. Limited funding had kept this dream from coming true until SFS members came to the rescue, establishing a reading program that has a mix of recreation to keep the students motivated and alert. Members along with a hand full of volunteers have helped to make his dream a reality. SFS would not exist without the unique way in which the Town of Okeene reached out to help their neighboring communities. As a result of this program, many of the school sites were able to start or expand before and afterschool programs.

The Okeene school district allowed the program to use their computer lab for members training while two of the other school sites allow all members to attend professional development training designed for school district teachers. Five of the school sites provide vehicles in which members from those sites can travel to member training and meetings. The Town of Okeene provides facilities free of charge for member and site supervisor trainings.

Potential for Replication

This program would be easy to replicate in other states because of the simple, yet effective design of the tutoring sessions. Members tutor students one-on-one or in very small groups for 30 minutes per day. Students must attend a minimum of fifteen tutoring sessions

before their scores are included as part of the performance measure. The goal is to show an increase in their report card grades to a passing grade or to increase at least one letter grade.

Successes

Reports from the 2002-2003 service year indicate that 56% of the students who received ten or more sessions of tutoring increased their report card scores. Members provided 119 enrichment or recreational activities for 1,041 youth. Serve for Success showed a 1,050 volunteer count in the different communities with 1,565 collective hours of service.

SFS reported that 343 students received ten or more sessions of tutoring over the course of the year. 84% of the students that were pre- and post-tested made gains ranging from 3% to 100%.

Three focus groups and evaluations for the current program year have been conducted. Parents, teachers, and school administration personnel completed the evaluations, which were designed using a validated survey form and system that could be easily replicated for other programs. The results of the parent surveys showed that 87% of parents noted an increase in the work and study habits of their children. 56% of parents noted an increase in their children's academic performance and self-esteem. The teacher surveys showed that 75% of teachers noted an increase in the work and study habits of their students involved with the program. 60% of teacher surveys noted an improvement in student academic performance.

Program success can also be measured by Serve for Success's ability to retain partnerships. Serve for Success has been serving school districts for two years, and all the districts have retained their partnership with the program. Many have increased their member participation. There are currently eight new sites that have applied and wish to join the program for the 2004-2005 grant year.

OREGON ASPIRE

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Volunteer
Recruitment/
Management

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE) mobilizes adult volunteer mentors through a structured program of recruitment, training, on-site supervision and evaluative feedback to help students access education and training beyond high school.

Program Description

AmeriCorps members recruit, screen, train and match volunteers with high school students. The important elements of the program which make it successful and sustainable are:

- Program is volunteer-focused. AmeriCorps members work with existing community members to link them both with the schools and the students.
- Design includes key sustainable elements: Schools move through phases of 1) initiating; 2) developing; 3) expanding and 4) sustaining. Direct support from the ASPIRE program decreases as the program becomes institutionalized in the school. This allows more schools to enter the program.
- Sponsoring organization is Oregon's financial aid agency, offering easy linkage to partnerships, scholarships, foundations and financial aid programs.
- Low cost-share, varied options for member terms (FT, PT, QT) and partnerships with high schools have made it an attractive program for small communities, allowing the program to reach very rural communities in Oregon.
- Program attracts local citizens as members as well as applicants from the national service pool. The ASPIRE team has been an excellent blend of diverse members that support each other and share their varied skills.
- Members receive extensive training in financial aid, volunteer recruitment and college admissions. The program has developed a copyrighted curriculum which is utilized by sites and updated annually.
- ASPIRE is for all students – not just low-income, low performing or those not interested in further school. It works to interest all students in continuing their education after high school. This creates a healthy mix of students and perspectives.

Members engage students who do not believe they can access postsecondary education because they are "not smart enough," do not have financial means, and/or

their parents have not attended college. During the school year members provide ongoing support to the volunteers and mentor some students who drop in at ASPIRE college career centers.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

The ASPIRE Program has a lasting effect on members, as well as mentors and students. Members and volunteer mentors receive extensive training on setting up volunteer programs, college admissions standards, the processes involved in accessing financial aid for college including completing a FAFSA and scholarship requirements, and “hands-on” experience in creating partnerships with local post-secondary institutions. Students are often first generation college attendees and thus have a potentially positive impact on the economic condition of Oregon.

Members themselves can use this information after they leave AmeriCorps, both personally and if interested, in a professional role through a financial aid position or high school counseling. Volunteer mentors remain in the community and build on their skills, returning as volunteers.

The program utilizes a Sustainability Plan which requires schools to progress through Phase 1 – Program Initiation (Year One); Phase 2 - Developing the Program (Years 2 & 3); Phase 3 – Expanding the Program (Years 3 &4); Phase 4 – Sustaining Level (Years 4+). Each phase has defined target goals and reduces the support of the ASPIRE program as well as the involvement of an AmeriCorps member. Phase 4 assumes that schools are able to run ASPIRE with a site team and need very little time and effort from the Region Supervisors. In Phase 4, the program has become entrenched in the school and community as shown by reaching agreed upon goals including use of the ASPIRE curriculum in the classroom.

Supporting Data

The program monitors the number of schools in each phase. In 2003-2004 there were 21 schools in Phase 1; 11 schools in Phase 2; 14 schools in Phase 3 and 14 schools in Phase 4. 26 AmeriCorps members enrolled and matched 1,673 students with 520 volunteer ASPIRE advisors.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

ASPIRE and its sponsor, the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, have been able to create strong partnerships. The ASPIRE program receives financial support through the Oregon Community Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation (Roseburg, OR) and through an Oregon University System Gear-Up grant. In addition, each AmeriCorps member is expected to create a unique partnership for their school with a post-secondary institution in the area, either a community college or a four-year school. These partnerships endure and become established links for future students.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Volunteer generation is at the core of the ASPIRE program. Community members that serve as ASPIRE advisors return, thus serving as a true ongoing resource for schools. Resource generation comes in the form of funding partnerships and through cost-share participation of the schools.

Potential for Replication

The ASPIRE model is replicable. The program has a copyrighted curriculum which can be made widely available. The current design is working in both rural and urban settings across the state. The ease of access to information through the computer, the space availability at schools, the desire of post-secondary institutions to reach out to first time college families and the recognition of the success of the current design has allowed this program to expand each year.

Successes

ASPIRE tracks not only the number of volunteers but the number of returning volunteers, as they are an indication of satisfactory experience. For the current year the program reports an 80% return rate of past volunteers.

Members gain knowledge that is useful both personally and professionally should they be interested in the fields of financial aid or counseling. The copyrighted ASPIRE curriculum provides very specific information on financial aid access, school selection, and post-secondary options.

The program successfully recruits at least 10% of the involved high schools' student body. They are currently researching ways to access data after the ASPIRE students leave high school as this information has proven difficult to obtain. Based on the program evaluation for 2002-2003, there was a 46% increase in ASPIRE students applying for Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) scholarships; students from ASPIRE were more likely to receive OSAC awards than other Oregon students (24% vs. 20% respectively); more students with a GPA less than 3.5 participated in ASPIRE during this year (51% in 2002-2003 vs. 36% in 2001-2002).

As with many AmeriCorps programs, the reputation of this program builds on itself and allows greater accomplishments each year with the same number of members. Schools and parents become familiar with the program concepts; partnerships with nearby universities and community colleges endure; students understand the program advantages as they move through their high school years; returning volunteer-mentors require less training and are excited to see their impact on students.

OREGON

Early Literacy Program

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Equal
Access to Education

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Early Literacy Program

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Program Mission and Goals

The Early Literacy Program is an innovative approach to increasing literacy for families in low income housing. Living in poverty and an inability to read at grade level by the third grade are key predictors of failure to graduate from high school, which in turn is a strong predictor of a continued life of poverty. The Early Literacy Program (ELP) strives to:

- Improve the early literacy skills of preschool children by providing family literacy training in housing developments throughout Multnomah county, the most populace county in Oregon;
- Expand teaching skills and early childhood competency of members through research-based early literacy training and ongoing instructional and professional development coaching;
- Eliminate, through program design, barriers faced by low-income families including language, transportation, cost and the capacity of Head Start programs to serve all eligible children;
- Assess key outcomes such as increased skills and increased reading practices of parents through external evaluation by Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.

Program Description

This program was launched in 2003 with five members serving at four sites. During the first year, variations on the initial design were tested, including the use of home visits, partnerships with Head Start, improved meeting spaces and identification of elements that make a particular housing complex more successful with this program. Based on the results from the first year, 2004-2005 members were placed in two-person teams and assigned to three urban housing developments. Options have expanded to include home visits and homework sessions in an effort to attract families and improve relationships. The majority of members are bilingual.

Members receive training on early literacy skill development based on the LEARNS curriculum "Training Activities for Training Tutors." They then conduct literacy sessions using a "train the trainer" approach, assisting parents to deliver activities as a tutor to their children. After each activity, families choose an age-appropriate book in English or Spanish to read together.

After each session, the members are available in the community room to answer questions, share observations and offer other resources and information to parents.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Children and parents are receiving life-long skills; parents learn skills that they can continue to use at home with their children, while their children will be better prepared to enter the school environment. In many cases, strengthening the use of the English language is a secondary effect for the adults. Improved skills increase the chances of participating families getting off federally subsidized housing. Additionally, increased neighborhood safety and familiarity is achieved by families coming together in the housing complexes.

Supporting Data

An initial evaluation by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory after the first year of operation found low income families received over 300 free books; members conducted other literacy-related activities including ESL tutoring, homework help, and school-based advocacy for individual students; many parents brought infants and older school-aged children to the sessions or home visits irregularly. These children, though not assessed as participants of the program, benefited from the sessions.

In 2003-2004 the five AmeriCorps members served a total of 111 children and 59 parents. (This is an unduplicated number of adults and children that attended at least one session or home visit.) Members recruited 67 community volunteers to join them in various activities relating to the program.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The Early Literacy Program has attracted partners such as Oregon's Children's Investment Fund which allows the purchase of books and funds the evaluation efforts underway with the Northwest Regional Education Lab. The program also has a strong partnership with the county library system which assists with member training and brings their mobile unit onsite upon request. Other partners include divisions within the Housing Authority which support the program through on-site staff, space allocation and promotion.

Potential for Replication

The program design works particularly well in housing developments. Housing authorities have access to data that helps in identifying sites with children in the correct age range. They also are able to designate space for the sessions and assist with contacting families.

Successes

This program is new and the evaluation methods are only beginning to produce the data that reflects impact. The NWREL Evaluation Report for 2004 provided data utilizing a survey adapted from the Stony Brook Family Reading Survey. Data was obtained on ten children who consistently participated in the literacy sessions. Participating children made substantial progress in reading readiness, literacy skills and behaviors. Ten parents participated in a pre- and post-survey, Seven of whom are Hispanic and do not speak English. In the post-survey seven parents reported that their children had started to read, nine parents felt their children were ready for kindergarten, eight reported they met other parents through the program, nine reported they had learned more about how their children grow and learn, and two parents reported that their children had improved at reading.

PENNSYLVANIA

Keystone SMILES

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Education Support

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

With major support from the Keystone School District, SMILES is carrying out its mission of “empowering people of all ages to improve the quality of their lives through learning, service and citizenship,” through a host of collaborative relationships that have been carefully and strategically built. With all program streams of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Clarion University, ten community and faith-based partners, as well as the boards and administrators of 18 school districts, SMILES carries out programs aimed at meeting the needs of the 50,000 residents affected by decades of industrial decline, high unemployment, and a lack of social and educational services.

Program Description

Keystone SMILES is a shining example of a grassroots service initiative that has offered support and hope to thousands of struggling residents in rural Pennsylvania. Founded in 1994 in Knox, Pennsylvania, the Keystone SMILES (Service Making an Impact through Learning Experiences with Students) AmeriCorps program evolved from the common vision of a handful of citizens interested in helping their small, rural community. Ten years later, Keystone SMILES has become the catalyst for positive change across a vast and impoverished ten-county region of rural northwestern Pennsylvania. The program provides critical support to students in more than a dozen rural school districts while offering service, educational, and vocational opportunities to youth and adults throughout the region. Approximately 100 AmeriCorps members serve annually in programs designed to:

- recruit 1,000 volunteers and service-learning participants to contribute at least 10,000 hours of service to Keystone SMILES programming;
- train 650 community members through 24 courses or workshops focused on homeland security, technology, construction trades, and youth development;
- provide social and behavioral enrichment activities such as teambuilding, mentoring, and study skills instruction to students who have been identified by teachers, parents, school administrators, and/or the juvenile justice system as being in danger of failing, or being suspended, expelled, or adjudicated; and

- provide tutoring to students, primarily in grades K-8, who have been identified as by teachers, parents, and school administrators as academically deficient in a target subject area.

Of the 53 poorest schools in the state, 34% are located within the ten primary service counties of Keystone SMILES/AmeriCorps. The area's drop-out rate is an alarming 27%. It is not surprising that the program has been an invaluable asset to rural educators by improving school readiness and school success for 47,000 students over the last ten years.

The Keystone SMILES Community Learning Center, a building provided through the generosity of the Alltel Corporation, is a beacon of hope and progress in the community of Knox and the surrounding area. It is a hub for a myriad of activities, including free vision and health screenings, GED instruction, community computer access and training, and senior citizen programs. SMILES is having a positive impact on the lives of real people, while simultaneously demonstrating that what we do together vastly outweighs what can be done alone.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Keystone SMILES and Clarion University's Center for Teaching Excellence has developed a comprehensive training. SMILES members participate in a training and assessment model that leads to certification as "highly qualified" instructional assistants as mandated by No Child Left Behind legislation. Under the model, members are required to complete a week-long training workshop series ending with proficiency testing to fulfill NCLB requirements for instructional assistants. Certified teachers can earn Act 48 credit. All members also receive ongoing training in service-learning through enrollment in an online class. The online course may be taken for graduate, undergraduate, or continuing education credit. Civic training includes CPR, First Aid, and Disaster Preparedness.

Rural school districts and agencies are provided with a pool of highly qualified instructional assistants. Certified teachers can acquire continuing education credits mandated by Pennsylvania to maintain their permanent Pennsylvania teaching certificate; non-certified members gain the certification to be employed as paraprofessionals.

Supporting Data

Members submit service data reports certified by each partnering agency that use professional assessment tools as well as assessments designed with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Project Star technical assistance providers.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

SMILES, Clarion University and 18 school districts form the core of a regional partnership that has been largely responsible for initiatives that address academic needs of students. The partnership has leveraged federal work study funds from Clarion University along with funds from the school districts and Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps to provide services which would otherwise not be offered to the area's children. These services, delivered by University students who are members of SMILES AmeriCorps, range from Rural PA Reads and Alternative Education programs to summer and school-year programs to promote classroom inclusion for students with disabilities.

Cross-program Connections

AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Learn and Serve America and RSVP all play a role in Keystone SMILES. While AmeriCorps members provide direct service in all 15 programs administered by SMILES, VISTA members have supported volunteer recruitment, resource generation and program coordination. RSVP has assisted with senior citizen programming, including a program that uses seniors as reading coaches for K-3 children. The Pennsylvania Department of Education's Learn and Serve program has teamed with AmeriCorps to form the Northwest PA Service-Learning Network to promote the use of service-learning as teaching methodology in rural school districts.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

SMILES has demonstrated innovation by using federal national service funding to leverage private and public funding for its development as a strong regional community resource. Other public funding includes: Mercer County Housing Authority, Clarion University, PA Department of Education, the Workforce Investment Act, Blazing Trails, EvenStart, CyberStart, and PowerUP. Private resources include: Community Foundation of Venango County, Walmart, Alltel Corporation, Clarion/Venango County Kiwanis and Rotaries, Parker Hunter, three banks, and dozens of rural businesses.

Potential for Replication

In 1996, CNCS chose Keystone SMILES as a case study for the National Service Leaders Training at the Presidio in San Francisco. SMILES incorporated the study results to attain and design a sustainability plan of action. The integrity and experience of its staff has stayed constant and committed to national service objectives and have demonstrated their abilities for replication.



Successes

- Underserved students in rural areas made academic improvements. Academic tutoring and assistance was provided to approximately 3,000 K-12 students in a variety of subjects in the 2000-2003 program years, with 80% of students served demonstrating an increase of at least one grade level in the target subjects.
- Reading proficiency improved for under-achieving K-3 students. 78% of 3,713 K-3 students who were tutored in reading demonstrated an increase of at least one grade in reading levels.
- More volunteers add service capacity to the region. Approximately 46,000 hours of service have been contributed by 5,588 non-AmeriCorps volunteers in the past three years to support SMILES projects across the region.
- Special needs students receive life and employment skills. In one year alone, more than 1,000 special needs students between ages of 14 and 21 were assisted by members who provided job preparation skills that help students successfully transition from school to work.
- Education awards improve access to post-secondary education. Since 2000, 336 SMILES members have earned an education award, representing a 90% retention rate.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Camp City Year (Columbia)

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Out of School Time

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

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Program Mission and Goals

The goals of Camp City Year are to:

- Create a safe, structured and positive learning environment for disadvantaged youth at a minimal cost during their spring break.
- Increase awareness of the concepts of democracy, acceptance, teamwork, and making a difference through interactive learning experiences that include curriculum, art, community service, and physical education.
- Expand project management skills in members as they recruit participants and external volunteers, plan and arrange the weekly schedule, develop age-appropriate curricula, and implement all facets of the program during the week of spring break.

Program Description

City Year Columbia, a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network, strives to provide opportunities for youth to become stewards of their communities. Each spring, corps members organize and lead Camp City Year, a dynamic day camp program that engages approximately 150 local children in service, educational games and other fun activities.

Members receive training and ongoing guidance from experienced departmental staff. This allows participants to plan and implement a coherent and robust camp experience for 150 1st to 5th graders. A majority of the students served through Camp City Year receive free or reduced lunch, coming from low-income home environments. With a registration fee of only \$10, the camp is accessible to parents and guardians of students that may have few other positive and meaningful options during the break.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Since Camp City Year is developed each year by AmeriCorps members, the individuals that work to plan and implement the program often learn valuable project management skills. Members are responsible for recruiting, confirming, and planning all facets of the curriculum, as well as securing and leading volunteers in service. Alumni frequently help during that week

because they understand the rewards and challenges of such a project.

Since the first spring break camp in 1996, some of the students who were campers have continued to serve with City Year Columbia. The program also runs Young Heroes which engaged youth in service, leadership development, and reflection on Saturdays. Recently, a volunteer that began serving as a camper continued to serve as a Young Hero and returned to provide guidance and mentorship as a Team Leader Assistant.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

In Columbia, the program has a long-standing relationship with Richland School District One, through which the district provides space in an elementary school, a faculty member to staff the camp, and custodial services for the week of their spring break. Their Volunteer Services Coordinator also helps to confirm the school in which the camp is located each year.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

The annual spring break camp also provides a venue for community members and business leaders to volunteer their time and services to ensure the campers have an enriching experience. Over the last nine years, over 621 volunteers have assisted with the Camp City Year. These volunteers come from the armed forces, corporations, church groups, colleges and universities, and surrounding communities.

Camp City Year provides a safe and enriching alternative for students during their spring break, which is vitally important for some families in the school district. Since the only charge for each camper is a nominal registration fee, the program relies on local partners for their support through in-kind gifts. During Camp City Year 2004, students were provided with meals each day with food received in-kind. In all, the food was worth almost \$1,500.

Successes



Each year, the program surveys the students and a sampling of the parents to determine the effectiveness of Camp City Year. Findings include:

- 86% of the first and second graders surveyed stated that they made new friends at Camp City Year.
- 80% of the first and second graders surveyed stated that they learned good things from Camp City Year.
- 80% of the third, fourth and fifth graders surveyed stated that they made new friends, learned good things and learned that service is fun.
- 90% of all campers surveyed stated that they had a pretty good or excellent time at camp.
- 98.96% of parents surveyed were overall satisfied with the logistics and outcome of camp.

TENNESSEE

Regional Intervention Program

Focus: Unmet Human Need
Issue Area: Early Childhood Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The Regional Intervention Program (RIP) AmeriCorps Project represents successful partnership of an evidence-based, early intervention therapeutic model (RIP) and a committed workforce (AmeriCorps) dedicated to "getting things done." Founded in 1969, RIP is an internationally recognized parent-implemented model for treatment of families of young children with behavioral disorders and/or developmental delays. RIP has been featured in over 90 books, journal articles, and presentations to national and international conferences.

RIP AmeriCorps goals include:

- Members receiving pre-service and ongoing training and clinical support in positive behavior management techniques from skilled RIP and RIP AmeriCorps staff.
- Members demonstrating specific competencies gained through direct observations in RIP classrooms conducted by RIP and RIP AmeriCorps staff.
- Members serving as behavioral models for RIP enrolled parents, working directly with preschool children in RIP settings, increasing appropriate classroom behavior and peer interaction skills.
- Members implementing approved behavioral intervention programs for RIP children in the community, helping them to successfully remain in least restrictive childcare or educational setting(s).
- Members providing information about RIP and children's mental health issues to the general public by staffing exhibits at community events.
- Members coordinating or assisting in community service projects, recruiting volunteer workforce for these projects.

Program Description

RIP is "parents helping parents helping children." RIP's mission is providing quality treatment for families of preschool children with behavioral challenges, within a positive atmosphere of parent-to parent support, thereby increasing the likelihood that children remain in home environments and succeed in least restrictive community settings. In December 1995, the Tennessee Commission on National Community Service (TCNCS) launched the RIP AmeriCorps Project. Its purpose was to provide critical behavioral support for RIP children identified by parents and RIP staff as most "at risk" of

expulsion from community placements in childcare, preschool, and kindergarten settings.

In 2005, RIP AmeriCorps receives 47% of total operating budget in federal monies. Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) and Centerstone, Inc. provide 53% grantee match. These numbers are consistent with past years.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

RIP AmeriCorps members provide substantial benefits to children at risk for long-term problems. Eight former members found employment at RIP sites statewide. One former member returned to Nashville after working in New York as a fashion designer during the Twin Towers tragedy. Influenced by her RIP AmeriCorps experience, she earned her Master's degree in Special Education. Three members continued their education, pursuing graduate degrees in related fields.

Supporting Data

Within a data based, objective framework, progress is reported quarterly. Initial and ongoing training is documented for members and volunteers. Members write daily case-notes about their assigned child's formal behavioral intervention program. Parties involved in behavioral support services sign an "Agreement to Participate." Volunteers working 40+ hours sign commitment sheets. Signed attendance sheets are kept for RIP AmeriCorps staff, members, and volunteers. Parents and community personnel receiving services complete satisfaction surveys.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

RIP supervisors within community mental health centers statewide sign participation agreements prior to member assignment. Receiving 50 hours of intensive behavioral training in classroom assistance, members serve as role models for RIP parents and others in faith-based and community organizations. Over 240 "placements" (i.e., behavioral support visits) have been successfully completed, primarily in childcare, preschool, and kindergarten settings; others in homes or public settings (e.g., grocery store) - some 480 adults impacted by RIP's positive techniques. Volunteers working with RIP children receive 15 to 40 hours of behavioral training, individualized to their specific function - to date, approximately 197 people, including high school and college students, Explorer Boy Scouts, and community members. Via presentations and exhibits, an estimated 1,500 citizens annually learn about AmeriCorps service, availability of RIP services via statewide network, early intervention, and children's mental health. Each year, members participate in four or more state/regional AmeriCorps service projects.

Cross-program Connections

One annual service project is "Make A Difference Day". In 1999 and 2000 RIP AmeriCorps hosted 14 community agencies, five streams of service, and 500 members/volunteers from AmeriCorps programs statewide, across 20 community service projects. Cross-training events have been conducted with TenneSeniors, Nashville Health Corps, and Nashville READ. RIP AmeriCorps will partner with American Heart Association, American Red Cross, and USA Freedom Corps to train RIP parents in emergency preparedness, disaster response, and making emergency preparedness kits.

Potential for Replication

The RIP Nashville headquarters has 14 expansion sites across Tennessee. Since 1974, 31 certified RIP programs have been established in 24 communities in Tennessee, Kentucky, Connecticut, Ohio, Washington, Canada, Brazil, and Venezuela. Presently, RIP is the subject of a study funded by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice, addressing key environmental events and responses to these events that enabled RIP programs to sustain themselves from 7 to 34 years. Fifteen programs implementing RIP's core innovative and research-based practices for remediating aggression in young children with Serious Emotional Disturbance are being examined.

Successes

In the past nine years, 117 members provided significant service to over 3,500 children with behavioral problems and their families in 14 RIP sites across the state. Over 90% of these children made significant improvements evidenced by decreasing inappropriate behavior, increasing and maintaining an acceptable level of appropriate behavior, improving social skills and the more than 100 unsolicited parent testimonials that RIP has received. In consecutive surveys (1999, 2002) the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) rated RIP Nashville 100% in compliance with rigorous behavioral standards for outpatient psychiatric facilities; the highest score ever given to any public or private organization.

In an annual summary of exit satisfaction surveys completed by all parents who participated in the RIP Program, over 98% stated that they would recommend RIP to a fellow parent. On these same surveys, RIP consistently receives a 9.5 rating on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least satisfied to 10, most satisfied) by the parents that the program serves.

Another indicator of the long lasting effect that RIP/AmeriCorps has had on members is the eight former RIP/AmeriCorps members have been or are currently employed at RIP Nashville headquarters, or RIP Expansion sites across Tennessee.

TENNESSEE Appalachia CARES

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Service Learning

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

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Program Mission and Goals

The Appalachia CARES program promotes Community, Action, Responsibility, Education, and Service as program cornerstones. Appalachia CARES engages its AmeriCorps members in direct service with students in primarily rural school systems in eleven Northeast Tennessee counties served by the Clinch-Powell and Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Councils. The overall goal of the Appalachia CARES program is to impact students and their community through service-learning in schools. The Appalachia CARES program strives to:

- Provide a “real life” connection between the students’ academic learning and their role and responsibility in society;
- Improve problem solving and critical thinking skills as well as the students’ understanding of the value of service and the relevance of education;
- Increase citizenship knowledge and life skills;
- Expand volunteer opportunities for parents, community volunteers, and community-based organizations through local schools; and
- Increase professional and educational opportunities for members through training and the AmeriCorps educational award.

Program Description

The Appalachia CARES program provides schools with project-based learning in which academic goals are accomplished through community service. The service-learning program is neither an add-on nor a diversion from the school curriculum. Service-learning is a powerful approach to teaching that provides students with authentic learning experiences in which they learn academic content in a real-life, real world context. These service-learning experiences bring relevance to classroom work as well as present real world opportunities for students to confront problems, consider alternatives, find solutions, and actively participate in making positive changes. Through this process, students become civically engaged, inspired, and motivated realizing that they can use their own skills, knowledge, and education to make a positive contribution to their communities regardless of their talents or their deficits.

AmeriCorps members initially facilitate a series of lessons and participatory activities, which focus on the five key elements of the Appalachia CARES service-learning program - Community, Action, Responsibility, Education, and Service. After these introductory lessons, the members' role is more supportive and supervisory than directive, allowing the students to lead the process of service-learning. Students brainstorm an initial list of community needs and problems, then prioritize those needs and conduct research to discover more about those problems. Students collectively decide on one problem or need around which they want to design a service project. At that point, the students design, organize, and carry out a service project under the guidance of the AmeriCorps member. Members provide the students with needed social support and interaction, which provides meaning in their lives by fostering a sense of being part of the community, a "civic identity."

When the students' service projects are complete, AmeriCorps members lead the students through thoughtful reflection activities, which reinforce the lessons learned during the service project. The reflection activities also provide an opportunity for students to internalize the positive contribution that they have made to their communities through service and their role and responsibilities in society. The AmeriCorps members also provide opportunities for the students to celebrate their successes.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Appalachia CARES serves students of public schools in 11 Northeast Tennessee counties, including Grainger, Claiborne, Union, Hancock, Hawkins, Sullivan, Johnson, Washington, Unicoi, Carter, and Greene. AmeriCorps members are placed only in schools with a demonstrated desire to incorporate service-learning into their curriculum. The goal of Appalachia CARES is to build a stronger bond between the school and community so that they become more mutually supportive. Therefore, school administration and classroom teachers must show full support of the students' service-learning projects.

The educational integrity of the Appalachia CARES program and the diversity of the students' service-learning projects cultivate, strengthen, and expand support for the program among a variety of community sectors, community-based organizations and local government.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The Appalachia CARES program produces three major types of community partnerships with the civic community, education, and faith-based organizations outlined below. The program diligently works to develop relationships that support the efforts of these organizations as well as the efforts of the Appalachia CARES program and the students' service-learning projects.

- Local School Systems and Participating Schools: provide member placement sites, site supervisors for on-site member supervision, program evaluation, training opportunities, actively participate in students' service-learning projects and curriculum integration activities, and fiscal support of the Appalachia CARES program.
- Local Colleges and Universities: assist the program in its recruitment efforts; provide training opportunities that support successful classroom implementation and member professional development opportunities.
- Community, Civic and Faith-Based Organizations: provide financial and volunteer support for the students' service-learning projects, assist the program in its recruitment effort, and provide enrichment opportunities for the students.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Partnership development is initiated by connecting the schools and students with a broad base of community groups in the implementation of service projects. These partnerships result in positive outcomes for everyone involved, including strong inter-generational connections and positive recognition of youth in the community. Students bring new resources and enthusiasm to the community-based organizations through their service projects. Students participating in Appalachia CARES are future citizens who will be more likely to volunteer as adults and motivated to get their parents involved in their current volunteer efforts. Community-based organizations are asked to help with student service projects and to present opportunities for future service by introducing the students to their work and organizational goals.

The student-led Appalachia CARES service-learning projects greatly increase the number and hours of individuals involved in volunteer service at the participating schools. Facilitated by AmeriCorps members, students are directly involved in volunteer service projects. Letters, newspaper articles, and other forms of communication encourage parents and other community members to volunteer to serve alongside the students for the betterment of the community. Volunteers assist with the service projects in many different ways - transportation, training, supervision, and meal and snack preparation as well as hands-on service with the students. By creating diverse volunteer opportunities and helping schools effectively engage volunteers, the Appalachia CARES program multiplies its impact, builds organizational capacity, and supports the development of sustainable volunteer programs.

Successes

2002-2003 Academic Year

- Engaged 2,948 students
- Completed 167 projects
- Involved 117 teachers in projects
- Recruited 253 volunteers for projects
- Completed 1,200.5 volunteer hours
- Involved 98 community-based organizations

Student Surveys

66.9% of the students surveyed from 9/1/2002 - 5/15/2003 indicated an excellent attitude toward education and service as compared to non-participating students.

Teacher Surveys: Quantitative Data: 9/1/2002 - 5/15/2003

- 96% (4-good or 5-exeptional on a 5-point scale) view service-learning as a valuable tool to enhance their student's regular classroom education.
- 97% (4-good or 5-exeptional on a 5-point scale) reported the service-learning project reinforced concepts, ideas, and skills their students were learning this year.

Community Surveys: Quantitative Data: 9/1/2002 - 5/15/2003

- 74% reported the students' service-learning projects had a very positive impact on the community.
- 22% reported the students' service-learning projects had a good impact on the community.

Camp Creek Elementary School received the Presidential Award for service-learning on June 16, 2001 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The school was involved with the Appalachia CARES service-learning program for five years. Currently without an AmeriCorps member, the school continues to make service-learning an integral part of the school's curriculum.

TEXAS

American YouthWorks

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Community Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

To better prepare its at-risk participants for success in the real world, American YouthWorks, an award-winning nonprofit in Austin, Texas, established Casa Verde Builders and Environmental Corps. Embodying hands-on learning, job skills development, career experience, and the opportunity to improve the community in ways young people could see realized immediately, these programs enroll approximately 100 youth each year. The program targets "at-risk" youth who exhibit the potential and interest for rebuilding their communities. Participants range in age from 17 to 26, many are former high school dropouts, often have been involved with the criminal justice system, and most need academic remediation and the opportunity to learn job skills.

Program Description

During their terms of service, Casa Verde Builders members will: complete construction on three to five low-income, environmentally advanced, energy efficient homes targeting first-time, low-income homebuyers and current neighborhood residents; 100% will be sold to, or already owned by, a low income family; 100% will receive a 3, 4, or 5 energy star rating (a score fewer than 10% of homes built nation wide earn); 100% will use 20 to 40% less energy to heat and cool themselves.

During their terms of service, Environmental Corps members will strive to complete: 40 Public Land Improvements (with at least five wildfire mitigations), 40 Habitat Restorations, and 15 Trail building/maintenance projects with increased access to and availability of parks and public lands. In each of three years, 100% of projects will be completed with 100% certified as needed by city/county officials with partner estimates of citizen usage.

Since 1995, in partnership with AmeriCorps and HUD-Youthbuild, Casa Verde Builders has completed over 80 green-built, energy-efficient homes for low-income first-time homebuyers. Many of these homes are in the Lincoln Gardens area of East Austin and have dramatically improved the neighborhood, generated tax revenues over \$500,000, and dramatically reduced crime (down 40%). Fire and Police officials attribute this improvement to better housing and more

individual homeownership.

In partnership with AmeriCorps, Environmental Corps (E-Corps) members work with communities to eliminate environmental risks, to increase neighborhood ownership and participation in parks and public lands, and to educate community members about environmental issues such as water quality and conservation and the need to protect other natural resources. There is an urgent need in Austin to address resources for an expanding population while protecting fragile habitat and water resources. Austin has one of the highest parkland per capita ratios in the U.S. with one of the lowest maintenance budgets. Environmental Corps not only addresses the training needs of the youth enrolled, but also provides skills, experience, and services to bridge the gap between community resources and needs.

The young people of Casa Verde and E-Corps have generated a great deal of well-deserved publicity and awards for both AYW and AmeriCorps. The most recent include: HUD-Best Practices ('99), Points of Light Foundation ('99), PEPNet ('00), Texas Association of Architects ('01), Professional Builder Magazine ('01), Keep Austin Beautiful ('02), and Austin Chamber of Commerce ('02).

Innovation

Lasting Impact

American YouthWorks (AYW) Casa Verde Builders and Environmental Corps take the unusual approach of using one problem to provide the answers for a variety of other problems. For example, Austin has a high dropout rate, generating a large number of unskilled at-risk youth. In addition there is a dearth of low income housing in communities suffering from depleted tax bases and high crime rates. Generally what little low-income housing there is to be found is built of poor quality materials requiring substantial maintenance over the years and large amounts of expensive energy to heat and cool. AYW saw a resource in the at-risk youth and trained them in the skills it took to build high quality homes in their neighborhoods. Once recruited, members went to work constructing extremely high quality, durable housing.

Supporting Data

- Affordable housing: sustainable homes that consume 30% less energy;
- Rebuilding neighborhoods: 80 homes adding over \$5,000,000 in neighborhood infrastructure;
- Expanded tax base for community, state and school: \$545,000 in property taxes over past 10 years;
- Reduced dependence on foreign energy sources: 80 homes save energy equivalent of 15 homes operating completely off the energy grid;
- Safer communities: in last decade, violent crime in this neighborhood dropped by 40%.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Casa Verde Builders and Environmental Corps both have high profiles and excellent reputations in the community and therefore generate a lot of interest in their projects. An average of 2,659 volunteer hours are generated each year through AYW's extensive networks of partnerships with both for-profit and non-profit entities seeking outlets for their employees and associates desiring an opportunity to give back to their communities.

Potential for Replication

A program like this would be imminently replicable. Every community has neighborhoods in need of renovation, tax bases in need of boosting, energy consumption in need of reduction, crime rates in need of mitigation and a large body of unskilled at-risk youth who can be the solution to all these problems. A partner in the Casa Verde Builders program, YouthBuild USA, is a national nonprofit organization that works to unleash the positive energy of low-income young people to rebuild their communities and their lives. The Casa Verde Builders program builds on the YouthBuild model and adds a 'green-building' component. Using inexpensive but strategic techniques, Casa Verde is able to build energy efficient homes. AYW has worked with programs in San Antonio and around the state to help them implement similar programs.

Successes

The impact on the members has been as great as the impact on the community and environment. These youth, many of whom were not academically successful before they joined the program, have been given a second chance to succeed. Some are co-enrolled completing their high school education, and all are developing high quality work and team skills, learning a trade, and earning a living allowance to take care of their families (many are parenting teens) and a nest egg for college. Both Casa Verde Builders and Environmental Corps incorporate service-learning through Certificates of Mastery, thereby guiding their progress in academics while performing service. Certificates of Mastery are issued and certified by the Texas Education Agency so that members with academic deficits are actually receiving High School Credits for the time they are spending on site performing service.

Tangible evidence of program success exists in the 80 reasonably-priced, energy-efficient homes occupied by low-income first time homebuyers. These homes represent an aggregate value exceeding \$5,000,000 invested in neighborhood infrastructure. The same homes have generated over \$500,000 in property taxes for local government to invest in other neighborhood improvements. The durable sustainable materials used to build these homes earned from 3 to 5 Energy Stars from the City of Austin Greenbuilders and save the homeowners an average of 20% on their energy bill each and every year, the equivalent of over two months of free energy each year. This energy savings is comparable to 15 of the 80 homes operating completely independent of the energy grid. In these days of expensive dependence on foreign energy sources, this type of savings reduces this dependence.

Partners of AYW, the City of Austin and Travis County, estimate that each year some 500,000 citizens use the parks, trails, and greenspaces developed and maintained by the Environmental corps crews. Through their efforts, thousands of acres of unimproved land, including wildlife habitats and protected aquifers for use by residents and wildlife, are being protected from development. These projects, ones that the city could not contemplate supporting, are being realized because of the members and the AYW program.

TEXAS HIPPY

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Parental
Education

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) Program is an internationally successful early education program whose mission is to empower educationally underserved parents to be the primary educators of their 3, 4, and 5 year-old children. The HIPPY/AmeriCorps program integrates the international HIPPY program model of parental involvement and school readiness with the AmeriCorps model of community service and civic involvement. This innovative partnership strives to break the cycle of educational limitations by reaching for the following goals:

- Empower educationally underserved parents to be the primary educators of their preschool children by increasing parents' understanding and comfort in their role as their child's teacher;
- Increase successful early school outcomes among children whose parents participate in HIPPYCorps and therefore take an active role in preparing their children for school by focusing on skills outlined in the Texas Education Agency Pre-kindergarten Guidelines; and
- Increase parental involvement in all aspects of their child's education.

Program Description

The integrated HIPPY/AmeriCorps model is implemented in communities of high need due to social isolation, low income, limited education and other risk factors. HIPPY targets parents in these communities so as to break the cycle of educational limitations by increasing the chances of successful early school experience among their children. Parents previously served by the program are then recruited as AmeriCorps members to serve in their communities and expand the circle of community service experience and commitment.

All members meet with parents in their home for 30 consecutive weeks. Home visits are based on a curriculum of simple, literacy-based activities, which are practiced in the home with parents so they can then complete the same activities with their child in daily increments during the week. HIPPY activities provide children with the opportunity to practice 80.4% of the 199 skills outlined in the Texas Education Agency Pre-kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines, and meet the

following research driven standards:

- Developmentally appropriate for the child;
- Can be done in the home using household items or other easy to find materials;
- Intrinsically interesting to the child;
- Promotes cognitive growth in the child; and
- Meaningful to the parent.

As parents begin to understand and feel comfortable in their role as their child's teacher, they are also asked to give back to the school by volunteering in their child's classroom, library or other needed areas. This increases parental involvement in schools and ensures that all parents are successful volunteers and supporters.

Results have shown that HIPPY children are better prepared for school, and 'above-average' in self-direction in approaching tasks. Another reported result is that HIPPY parents are more involved in all aspects of their child's education.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Members serve in seven cities, creating an impact across Texas. Members increased their sense of civic responsibility and civic engagement actions as follows:

During the 2003-2004 program year, members attended civic responsibility videoconference sessions and completed a service project engaging the families they serve. Projects included:

- Establishment of an adult literacy class in the meeting room of an inner-city apartment complex, training parents to be tutors and engaging 12 low-literacy adults in the class, with ten adults receiving the Mexican elementary certificate.
- Cleaning up an inner-city school yard in collaboration with a nearby Veterans hospital. Over 100 parents, members, staff and hospital staff participated and the neighborhood sparkled!

A community services information packet was developed and distributed to over 300 members of a suburban community with a significant number of immigrant families to help make them more aware of local services available in Spanish. Members also developed a booklet with local organizations, phone numbers and Spanish speaking contacts and distributed copies to the core group of parents who each agreed to further disseminate it to three or more people who really needed it.

Supporting Data:

- Parent volunteering - weekly log, parent sign-in at school, pre/post parent surveys
- Member service hours - daily time log
- Service project implementation - member civic responsibility workbook, service project report and presentation
- In-home literacy activities - daily parent log

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Each member serves 15 families for 30 consecutive weeks. The first few visits are spent building a rapport and introducing the curriculum and techniques parents will use to teach their children. Once relationships are built, during every weekly home visit each parent is given various options and ideas for volunteering.

From 2001-2004, members have cumulatively generated 2,203 volunteer parents who have served in schools for 16,258 hours. Their services vary, as follows:

- Reading in the classroom;
- Participating in PTA and site-based management committee;
- Chaperoning field trips and special events;
- Preparing classroom material; and
- Supervising lunchroom, crosswalk and playground.

Potential for Replication

HIPPYCorps sites are developed over a period of one to three years. Communities are provided technical assistance in fund development, staff training, community collaborations and outreach. This 'start up' phase is important in establishing a strong community HIPPY model. Once HIPPY is established the AmeriCorps piece is introduced. This allows for strong integration of two distinct program models.

Sustainability begins with the program replication system, and continues with ongoing support from Texas HIPPY (e.g., all site coordinators completed two days of sustainability training in April 2003). The Texas HIPPYCorps office is securing sustainable funding for ongoing costs of regional development and support, in collaboration with HIPPY USA (national office) and Texas HIPPY Advisory Council.

Successes

The HIPPYCorps program has a marked impact on the parents, children, and communities in which they operate. Much data has been collected that also compares children served to children not served by HIPPY members. These outcomes are described in the performance measures below.

Classroom Adaptability Performance Measure:

- 2000-2001: Kindergarten teacher survey of 176 children (152 HIPPY, 51 comparison) regarding their school readiness demonstrated that 80% of HIPPY children were rated as "adapted to the classroom" compared to 58% of non-HIPPY children.
- 2001-2002: Kindergarten teacher survey of 61 children showed 79% of HIPPY children to be "ready for school"; the standard set by the program was 75%.
- 2002-2003: 92% of HIPPY children were rated by their teachers as "adapted to the classroom" compared to only 77% of non-HIPPY children in the same classrooms.

In-Home Literacy Performance Measure:

Program Completion: 94% of HIPPY families completed the full 30-week curriculum, translated as over 800 parents working with their child on a daily basis for 20 minutes each day, five days per week, for 30 weeks. This added 40,000 hours of school readiness instruction, an average of 50 hours per child.

Parent Volunteering Performance Measure:

New parents were interviewed regarding their general parental involvement and level of volunteerism, both at the beginning and end of the program year. The survey found that parents increased their volunteering in the classroom by 65%; 80% of parents increased their attendance at PTA meetings; and 56% attended field trips. 75% of HIPPY parents engaged in informal talks with the teacher or principal three or more times during the school year, as compared to 68% of the parents in the comparison group. Teachers also said that 33% of HIPPY parents in their classroom attended school events three or more times during the year, compared to only 19% of non-HIPPY parents.

WASHINGTON

Roadmap to Civic Engagement

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Civic Education

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Roadmap to Civic Engagement

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Program Mission and Goals

At a time when democratic participation, especially among young people, is at an all-time low, national service programs have been called upon to reawaken our nation's civic spirit. To meet this challenge, the Washington Service Corps (WSC) developed a unique civic engagement model in which AmeriCorps members go through a civic engagement curriculum, *The Roadmap to Civic Engagement*, as students themselves and then partner with local youth-serving organizations to facilitate the same curriculum with middle school youth. Created by Service Learning Northwest (SLNW), and thus far implemented by over 1200 AmeriCorps members in WSC projects, the *Roadmap* is designed to:

- Prepare youth for active citizenship using the skills and passion for service of AmeriCorps members;
- Enhance the skills, actions, knowledge, and attitudes of both AmeriCorps members and youth regarding active community and democratic participation;
- Ensure that this active community involvement is connected to the foundational principles of democracy; and
- Create a process through which youth and AmeriCorps members learn to identify needs and assets in their community, develop strategies to meet a significant community need, and carry out a service project to meet that need.

Program Description

To accomplish its goals, the *Roadmap* uses a service-learning methodology that incorporates community service and reflection into academic learning. It is a very effective program because it is experiential and requires youth to choose his or her own service project to meet a genuine community need. Each WSC AmeriCorps team experiences the curriculum as students before taking it forward to facilitate it with youth so that they also gain the benefits of the civic engagement program.

The *Roadmap* is divided into seven units, each including a focus activity, a lesson, and a reflection. The curriculum begins with team building, and then moves on to discuss community, both generally and specifically. As they examine their community, youth identify both its assets as well as its needs. They then learn about the ideals of democracy and the history of

voting before putting that knowledge into action by voting to choose the most significant community need. After votes are tallied, they begin to brainstorm service projects to meet their chosen need. They vote again to choose a service project, which is then planned and carried out by the youth. Finally, youth and members celebrate and reflect on their project and its impact on their community.

In the 2003-2004 program year, WSC AmeriCorps members facilitated the service-learning curriculum with over 600 young people from youth-serving organizations. As a result of this program, youth in Washington carried out more than 50 service projects ranging from food drives to fundraising for animal shelters, to baking Rice Krispie treats for the troops in Iraq.

As the program was being implemented, WSC contracted with ABT Associates, an internationally recognized consulting firm, to evaluate its effectiveness through assessments of members, youth, and partner sites. After receiving the formal evaluation for 2002-2003 as well as preliminary findings from 2003-2004, WSC and SLNW have gained valuable experience and new insight into both the impact of the program as well as its success factors.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

In addition to providing specific and specialized training to AmeriCorps members that focuses on what it means to be an American citizen, the responsibilities of democratic citizenship, and the obligations of freedom, WSC has taken it a step further by presenting the same curriculum to youth throughout Washington state.

By working with AmeriCorps members and using the *Roadmap*, youth begin to see themselves as change agents capable of affecting the world around them and positively impacting their community. By incorporating elements of history, government, reading, and writing, as well as reflection, the *Roadmap* ensures that youth are learning while at the same time meeting a genuine community need. This type of service-learning has been shown to be a highly effective education tool with lasting impacts on participants.

Moreover, the resulting service projects have created an impact in the communities in which the program was implemented. In 2003-2004, more than 60 projects were carried out by youth, each one meeting a need in a community and increasing the likelihood that these hundreds of youth will continue to serve in the future.

Supporting Data

For the ABT Association evaluation of the WSC *Roadmap* program, youth and member participants were given a retrospective survey containing questions relating to skills, actions, knowledge, and values necessary for civic engagement. AmeriCorps members and youth reported statistically significant positive changes for all questions. Anecdotally, reflection pieces written by members and youth indicate the *Roadmap* has made a lasting impact on their community and civic engagement.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

According to the 2002-2003 ABT study, 43% of project supervisors and 19% of youth-serving organizations reported that the *Roadmap* led to a substantial number of new partnerships with other community service organizations. Because each WSC AmeriCorps team was required to facilitate the program with youth, all sites, even those not traditionally associated with youth (such as the environmental and construction teams) created

partnerships with local youth-serving organizations such as Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and Campfire.

Cross-program Connections

Many WSC project sites have both AmeriCorps*VISTA and AmeriCorps members who collaborated on the *Roadmap* program. Additionally, the *Roadmap* program was the result of a partnership with Service Learning Northwest, a technical assistance organization funded through Learn and Serve America.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

By its very nature, the *Roadmap* program is ideal for generating volunteers and resources to meet community needs. As a result of the *Roadmap*, the 600 youth who participated in 2003-2004 became volunteers in their communities, and many of their projects generated resources for local organizations. For example, one group of middle-school students secured 3,950 pounds of food for the local food bank, while a 6th grade afterschool club generated over \$500 in donations for a wildlife park. Students volunteered at parks, elementary schools, the Humane Society, and other organizations.

Potential for Replication

The *Roadmap* project has incredible potential for replication among other AmeriCorps and similar programs. While meeting the performance measures related to member civic engagement, it creates opportunities to extend that learning to youth, thereby greatly increasing community impact. The *Roadmap* curriculum is available for other programs to use, and WSC has extensive supporting materials to aid in implementation.

Successes

In the 2002-2003 program year, WSC AmeriCorps members facilitated the service-learning curriculum with over 750 young people from youth-serving organizations. Following are highlights of the ABT Associates 2003-2003 formal evaluation:

- The surveys administered to youth and members after they completed the *Roadmap* indicate that participants' understanding of what it means to live in a democratic community increased during the time they were engaged in the *Roadmap*.
- AmeriCorps members and youth reported significant positive changes for all questions on their respective surveys.
- The curriculum enhanced member and youth understanding of the concept of community.
- Among the member subgroups examined (race, educational level, age, and gender), Hispanic members and youth exhibited significantly higher change scores than their non-Hispanic counterparts.
- Members felt that exposing youth to the ideas and themes presented in the *Roadmap* had positive effects on their civic awareness and engagement.
- Project supervisors and the youth-serving organizations they partnered with reported their involvement with the *Roadmap* led to a substantial number of new partnerships with other community service organizations.

WASHINGTON

Washington Reading Corps

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Literacy

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

The mission of the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) is to improve reading abilities of students in grades K-6 across Washington State. This is achieved through research-based tutoring of struggling readers and effective collaborations among schools, families, community members, national service, business, and state partners. Initially created in response to the state's low reading scores, the WRC now serves a critical role as an intervention strategy to address reading achievement goals of the No Child Left Behind Act.

WRC objectives:

- students in grades K-6 will be tutored in reading and reading readiness skills;
- peer and cross-age tutors will provide tutoring to WRC struggling readers;
- volunteers will be recruited to tutor struggling readers and 100% of volunteers will be trained; and
- schools will have the resources to sustain community involvement in literacy improvement efforts in the absence of national service members.

Program Description

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) conducted a rigorous program evaluation for the 2003–2004 program year which provides a description of program elements, highlights program components and outcomes. Schools use existing assessment data and methods in identifying students for participation in the WRC program and for individualizing tutoring sessions. Tutoring sessions are required to be a minimum of 20 minutes with groups consisting of no more than four students at a time. By the conclusion of the program year, WRC-identified students receive a target goal of 60–80 hours of tutoring instruction time.

At the school and community partner level, WRC schools and sub-grantees are required to include tutor training and professional development for teachers of WRC students. The Washington Service Corps, project partners, and each school work together to provide members the training they need to be effective and successful. Tutor training is most often provided on an on-going basis. It is expected that tutors be trained in the research-based tutoring program implemented at

each school. Training content is also likely to include reading tutoring strategies, reading level assessment, behavior management, giving feedback, confidentiality, fluency, comprehension, phonics, and school culture and orientation. Site supervisors often provide training to teachers in their school regarding an overview of the WRC program, WRC assessments, communicating student needs to tutors, and managing volunteer tutors.

AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members provide:

- one-on-one and small group reading tutoring;
- recruitment, training, and management of volunteer reading tutors; and
- capacity-building services through development or enhancement of sustainable systems to engage the community and family in support for these efforts.

WRC members help build capacity of local school reading programs by working with school staff to design or enhance a tutoring volunteer program that is aligned with the school reading curriculum and overall school schedule. Members may do this by: creating a place for, and engaging, volunteers; developing systems to handle and maintain community adult, peer, and cross-age tutor programs; creating and strengthening family literacy involvement programs; and fostering community partnerships to support the program through cash or in-kind contributions.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

WRC *members* comment on how their year (or more) of service has influenced them and their direction: "Because of this year of service I have decided to pursue a career in teaching." Schools involve parents and *community* members in their WRC program primarily by using them as tutors or inviting them to participate in family literacy events. Events for parents and caregivers encourage increased parent/caregiver involvement in the literacy space of their child's life.

WRC members supported family and community literacy involvement activities during the past year, making school environments more welcoming to parents and families. WRC members encourage and organize cross-age and peer tutoring. Engaging youth in reading tutoring often provides one of the most reliable sources of tutors, gives youth the opportunity to serve others and to begin or strengthen their ethic of service, involvement in and attachment to, their community.

Supporting Data

- Results of last year's post-service career survey showed 61% of members plan to have a career working with children; 81% stated that they will continue to volunteer with youth after their service year; and 62% have an interest in teaching. Members may in the future help relieve the problem of teacher shortages.
- Over half of WRC volunteers were peer and cross-age tutors. Teacher observations and student survey results indicated that students involved in tutoring fellow students increased confidence and a desire to continue serving others, laying the groundwork for a lifelong ethic of service.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

The collaboration that created the WRC, consisting of the Washington Service Corps, Offices of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Governor, the State AmeriCorps*VISTA office, and the Washington Commission for National and Community Service, is an unprecedented state-level partnership that remains strong.

Cross-program Connections

AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve side-by-side to support the WRC mission. Additionally, members from other national service programs including RSVP and the Senior Corps are recruited to provide tutoring to WRC students.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

During the 2003–2004 program year, approximately 8,500 volunteer tutors were recruited (adults and youth) and contributed approximately 200,000 hours of tutoring services. The Washington State legislature appropriates state funds (used for school year and summer grants, program evaluation, regional school support, and administrative costs) which leverage federal funds for 300 AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members allocated to WRC schools. The WRC develops community collaborations between volunteers and local businesses. Approximately \$500,000 in cash or in-kind support has been contributed each year to support programs at the local and state levels.

Potential for Replication

In efforts to reach as many schools as possible, the WRC program has built in flexibility. The WRC program is replicated at each elementary school and intentionally designed to be aligned to classroom instruction. NWREL has identified “essential program elements,” components of the program that are required to maintain program integrity, and performance measurements have been created and measured in support of the national service aspect of the program. Maintaining essential program elements, schools have the option to shape the WRC program in ways that can best meet their individual school needs.

Successes

The degree to which the reading abilities of K-6 students improved was assessed in two ways: primarily, through analyses of pre-test and post-test assessment data; and secondarily, in qualitative responses to a 2003–2004 program year site supervisor survey.

- Yearlong WRC students, in each grade, assessed with the Slosson showed the following progress for the 2003–2004 program year:
 - First-grade students started the school year nine months behind grade level, gained 1.6 grade equivalencies, and were post-tested at one month shy of grade level.
 - Second-grade students started the school year seven months behind grade level, gained 1.5 grade equivalencies, and were post-tested at grade level.
 - Third-grade students started the school year three months behind grade level, gained 1.3 grade equivalencies, and were post-tested two months above grade level.
 - Fourth-grade students started the school year two months behind grade level, gained 1.4 grade equivalencies, and were post-tested four months above grade level.
 - Fifth-grade students started the school year seven months behind grade level, gained 1.5 grade equivalencies, and were post-tested at grade level.
 - Sixth-grade students started the school year one month behind grade level, gained 1.6 grade equivalencies, and were post-tested seven months above grade level.
- Site supervisors reported that:
 - 86.9% of WRC students’ reading skills such as phonics, work attack skills and vocabulary were either greatly improved or improved.
 - 84.5% of WRC students’ reading comprehension skills greatly improved or improved.
 - 71.1% of WRC students’ critical reading skills greatly improved or improved.
- The WRC significantly increased the level of family and community literacy involvement activities occurring at schools to an average of three events per year. Survey results from family members attending literacy events last year indicated that 97% felt the events were useful to them and or their children.

WEST VIRGINIA Energy Express

Focus: Education
Issue Area: Out of
School Time

Innovative Elements

- Supporting Data to document impact
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

Energy Express promotes the school success of children living in low-income West Virginia communities by:

- Providing 58% of their daily nutritional requirements;
- Maintaining or increasing their reading achievement during the summer;
- Increasing the personal efficacy and commitment to service of college student AmeriCorps members;
- Involving families and community members in summer learning; and
- Collaborating with community agencies and organizations to support summer learning.

Program Description

The program reverses the typical "summer slide" of poor children documented by numerous studies. Each summer more than 3,300 children entering first through sixth grades are served in about 90 West Virginia communities by Energy Express. More than half of the children have participated in the preceding summer. Professional educators supervise nearly 500 summer AmeriCorps members and additional AmeriCorps alumni in their 300 hour service assignments. A community collaborative provides leadership for Energy Express locally and raises 30% of the site cost.

Prior to the children's six week program, site teams participate in a three-day statewide training held on the campus of a West Virginia college. Energy Express site coordinators, mentors and volunteer coordinators follow different agendas as they move through sessions that help prepare them for their time with children and volunteers. The culminating event is an AmeriCorps swearing-in ceremony where AmeriCorps members and alumni pledge themselves to a summer of service.

At each community site, five to eight AmeriCorps members each work with a small group of eight children. The group eats breakfast and lunch served family-style and engages in reading-related activities that make reading meaningful. The members' service activity is not "tutoring." Rather, members engage children in reading aloud, shared reading and writing activities, journaling, bookmaking, creative art, drama, and other activities to maintain what children have gained during the school year. Not only is the summer slide halted, children's reading scores increase!

Energy Express has a “place-based” curriculum. Activities are focused on weekly themes that build on the child’s experience and connections: Myself, Family, Friends, Homeplace, Community, Making My World a Better Place. All children do a community service project during the last week of the program, and each week each child receives a take-home book related to the theme.

At each Energy Express site, an AmeriCorps member serves as a volunteer coordinator. Working with other members at the site and with community partners, the member recruits, orients, trains, supervises and recognizes volunteers who come from all parts of the community. Most of the volunteer effort is focused on one-on-one reading and writing with children but volunteers do a myriad of activities at the site.

In addition to their work with children and volunteers, each site team partners with a faith- or community-based organization to plan, implement and evaluate a service project based on identified needs. Teams have helped with soup kitchens, food pantries, clothing closets, food drives and book drives. They have prepared bag lunches for the children to eat on weekends, prepared school supply kits for the fall, and assisted Habitat for Humanity in building local homes.

AmeriCorps members are well-trained and supervised. They participate in reflection to make sense of their experiences and in civic responsibility activities to help them become better citizens.

Energy Express has developed an outstanding reputation for meeting the needs of children, for involving the community in children’s learning, and for delivering a high quality program with demonstrated impact.

Innovation

Supporting Data

Energy Express employs a comprehensive program evaluation with quantitative and qualitative strategies. Quantitative results are consistent from year to year and document that AmeriCorps objectives are met: statistically significant increases in children’s reading (the “average” Energy Express child gains three to four months in broad reading scores during the six week program); 58% of daily nutritional requirements provided to children; statistically significant increases in AmeriCorps members’ personal efficacy and commitment to community service; high levels of volunteer support; and communities working collaboratively to enhance children’s learning. Emerging as the most dominant theme from a qualitative study was the importance of the relationships which develop between college student AmeriCorps members and children. In another study, Energy Express children indicated that they attend because it’s fun, they particularly enjoy the “big art,” and they have friends who should attend because the program is fun and they need help with reading.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

Under the leadership of AmeriCorps members serving as volunteer coordinators, Energy Express has demonstrated tremendous success in involving the community in children’s learning. Each summer almost 5,000 volunteers contribute nearly 85,000 hours at Energy Express sites. More than 40% of all volunteer time is devoted to reading or writing with children; each child reads with a volunteer 15 to 20 minutes every day.

Over 35% of the volunteers were pre-teens and teens. Some were earning community service credit; some needed breakfast and lunch; some lived in communities with few

summer activities. All engage in service which makes a difference in children's lives. Numerous Energy Express participants have become volunteers, and a number of volunteers have become AmeriCorps members serving with Energy Express. Other volunteers include Senior Corps participants, parents and other family members, community members and stakeholders.

While the number of volunteers and the number of hours they contribute is impressive, a quote from the parent of an Energy Express child captures the spirit of the program. "We all become community in Energy Express."

Potential for Replication

Summer learning loss is a major problem facing communities across the country and the success of Energy Express can be replicated by those communities. The program staff has developed program materials including manuals, videotapes, and training outlines. The members of West Virginia University Extension Service's literacy team are excellent trainers and are available to support replication efforts.

Successes

See the previous section for a discussion of program evaluation that documents program success. Other indicators of program success include:

Recognitions:

- 2001 U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary's Award for Superior Service
- 2000 Northeast Cooperative Extension Directors Award for Excellence
- 1997 Council for State Governments Innovations Award
- 1997 Joint Council of Extension Professionals Awards for Excellence in Teamwork

Featured articles:

- 2004 Corporation for National and Community Service, Summer Newsletter
- 2000 Corporation for National Service and National Institute on Out-of-School Time, *Service as a Strategy in Out-of-School Time: A How-to-Manual*
- 1999 U.S. Department of Education, *Start Early, Finish Strong*
- 1998 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, *Making After School Count*

Energy Express has also gained inclusion as a line item in the West Virginia State Budget.

WISCONSIN

Operation Fresh Start

Focus: Unmet Human Need

Issue Area: Community Need/ Member Development

Innovative Elements

- Lasting impact on Members, Community, or State
- Supporting Data to document impact
- Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships
- Cross-program Connections
- Outstanding Volunteer and/or Resource Generation
- Potential for Replication in other states

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Program Mission and Goals

Operation Fresh Start (OFS) AmeriCorps members are at-risk young people, 16-24 years old, who come from backgrounds of poverty. They are high school drop-outs, single parents, juvenile/adult offenders, and/or people with disabilities. OFS provides its AmeriCorps members with an opportunity to serve their community within the context of a comprehensive training and support program. OFS links service with pre-employment and work maturity training, as well as classroom instruction in basic skills, GED/HSED preparation or diploma completion, mental health and AODA counseling, health and nutrition programming, independent living classes, career exploration, and placement in jobs and/or post-secondary education. In this way, service becomes a springboard to long-term self-sufficiency and active citizenship.

Program Description

Members are organized into eight-member crews, with up to eight volunteers at a time joining a specific crew. An OFS staff site supervisor, who serves as mentor, counselor, and trainer, leads each crew. The site supervisor monitors each member's individual service plan and supervises them during all housing, conservation, and disaster relief work, special service projects, and special events. OFS' state-certified teachers provide members with six to eight hours per week of basic skills and/or HSED instruction. OFS staff help members begin the transition from AmeriCorps to jobs or post-secondary education; staff link members to potential job leads and expose them to the full range of continuing education options, including vocational and four-year colleges and trades-related apprenticeship programs. Members are encouraged to develop long-range educational plans and are helped to understand the connection between continuing education and the career ladder. After members complete their service, an OFS placement coordinator will conduct monthly follow-up calls for 12 months and will be available to help resolve employment or education-related problems.

Each year, OFS AmeriCorps members:

- Build eight affordable housing units in Dane County;
- Complete 8-16 environmental projects for the City of Madison Parks Department;
- Engage 80 community volunteers in meaningful

- service projects;
- Enter employment, post-secondary schooling, or further training (75-80% of members who complete their service accomplish these goals); and
- Complete the Basic Skills Competency and pass 1-7 tests for the HSED (65% of members achieve these goals).

OFS' overall goal for its members is that they become contributing citizens throughout and upon completion of their term of service. The program develops the skills and confidence young people need to become leaders and to gain responsibility and control of their lives.

Innovation

Lasting Impact

Since 1970, OFS has served 6,500 individuals, 85% of whom have been youth ages 16 to 24. OFS has an excellent record of success, assisting 80% of its members to complete the goals of the program (job placement and/or graduation to post-secondary education). Follow-up studies show that 60 to 65% of these members achieve long-term self-sufficiency through retention of family-supporting jobs and independence from public assistance or correctional programs. OFS crews have built or rebuilt 175 housing units sold to low-income, first-time homebuyers and completed over 150 conservation projects throughout Dane County.

Supporting Data

OFS conducts long-term (ten-year) follow-up studies of its graduates and reports the results annually to funding sources. A June 2004 Brandeis University survey shows that 82% of OFS graduates are currently either in post-secondary education or in jobs averaging \$11.85 per hour; 91% receive no government support; and 84% have remained free of such behaviors as selling drugs or being convicted of a felony.

Exceptional and/or Unique Partnerships

OFS collaborates with Madison Area Technical College (MATC) in providing support to members seeking career-track employment. During the members' term of service, an OFS placement and follow-up coordinator assists the members in developing career concepts and goals. As members graduate, specially identified staff within MATC provide intensive transition services to the members. The goals of this partnership are to raise young people's aspirations for higher-level careers, improve their understanding of how to achieve them, and provide the support necessary to help graduates maintain their commitment to success.

Cross-program Connections

In partnership with the state commission and national direct program, OFS has expanded the number of AmeriCorps slots available to young people in the Madison area.

Volunteer and/or Resource Generation

OFS has established relationships with several local corporations who provide volunteer assistance to members on service projects. These businesses include Kraft Foods, John Deere Credit Union, Marshall Erdman, and Alliant Energy. OFS encourages each to "adopt" an OFS site to which their volunteers are assigned.

Potential for Replication

Since 1998, OFS has acted as a program model for a replication effort entitled Wisconsin Fresh Start (WFS), which began as an initiative of the Wisconsin Governor's Office. Today, WFS includes ten communities and 12 programs and is administered by the Bureau of Housing of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, which grants awards on a competitive basis to local community and faith-based organizations to replicate the OFS model. The Bureau of Housing contracts with OFS to provide technical assistance to each of the selected program operators. In the past five years, over 500 at-risk youth have participated and 43 affordable homes have been constructed. This year, it is projected that at least 12 new homes will be built, 65 youth will be diverted from the criminal justice system, 130 youth will earn over \$900,000 in wages, 75% of those lacking a diploma will earn a basic skills competency or GED/HSED, and each member will earn between \$1000 and \$4000 in education awards. OFS believes that this same type of effort could result in the successful replication of the program within other states.

Successes

OFS was founded in 1970 to provide young male offenders and high school drop-outs with a paid 30 hour per week opportunity to learn basic work skills, prepare for the GED tests, secure and retain employment, and contribute to the community by renovating sub-standard housing into safe, energy-efficient, affordable homes sold to low-income families. OFS has expanded its methods of recruitment and the target population it serves to include women, persons with disabilities, single parents, and in-school youth who need alternative schooling. OFS has expanded its capacity to provide comprehensive training, classroom services, leadership development, and supportive services to members and has expanded its service projects to include conservation and disaster preparedness. OFS has also expanded and diversified funding.

OFS' ability sustain and expand its services is evidenced by the organization's extensive funding base: Dane County CDBG Commission for HOME funds, Workforce Investment Board, United Way, Madison Community Foundation, City of Madison and Dane County HUD, Dane County Human Services, HUD Youthbuild, Wisconsin Department of Corrections, and local school district state aids are examples.



OFS has been recognized both locally and nationally for its service and training program. Awards include: 1986 Governor's Employment and Training Award, 1993 President's Volunteer Action Award, 1998 Governor's Replication Initiative, 1999 Dane County Juvenile Court Outstanding Service Award, and 2002 Wisconsin Community Service Award.



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