



Holiday 2006
Volume 2, Issue 1

Belleville AmeriCorps

Newsletter

Happy Holidays from Belleville AmeriCorps
Members & Staff !

Greetings!

I am sure so many of you are echoing the statement, "Where did the time go this year?" I know for me personally it has been an incredibly busy year. I can attest to the fact that it has also been extremely busy for the Program and members. This past year was full of travel, meetings, and projects, as well as the duties of managing seventy-five members. As my staff and I said goodbye to the school year members this past May, we ushered in thirty-seven new members that served with us for eight weeks at three local summer camps. As these members were wrapping up their service—and for many of them getting back to college—selections were being made for the 2006-2007 school year. Currently, twenty-five members have signed on to support the various activities within the city of Belleville. While the members are serving as tutors within Belleville School District #118 and as volunteer coordinators at Franklin Neighborhood Community Association and Henry Raab School, they also support the developmental reading classes at Southwestern Illinois College. One member is assisting at Community Kindness Re-Sale Shop in downtown Belleville. The members have truly embraced the three components of the Program—tutoring, service, and training. A major highlight to the first couple months of service was a trip to Bloomington, Illinois, to celebrate their service. Members from all across the state came together on October 25th for the Swearing In-Ceremony. This event and local service projects helped to create the synergy among the members. As the team continues to develop and members share their leadership experiences with us, the staff, partners, and fellow members are able to appreciate the richness found in the diversity of this incredibly talented group. This year's members, as you will see, represent a variety of disciplines and come from the local area as well as cross country. As they have developed new friendships and learned about their similarities and differences, one thing I can say is that they "truly" have the spirit of service at heart. The members are actively engaged in community service activities and are in the process of pursuing a city-wide community mapping project. The goal for AmeriCorps Programs is to foster a commitment to life long civic engagement. As the members are serving and meeting the needs of local students and neighbors, they are also developing skills related to community development and learning more about who they are and what they value as they walk through a small-group reflection series entitled "Speak Civically". It is a pleasure to witness their energy and enthusiasm to discuss social issues and take action. I appreciate the uniqueness of each of them and look forward to a successful year.

Sincerely,

Julie Haupt
Program Director

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Making a Difference by Amanda Guinn

It is no surprise that the AmeriCorps members in Belleville make a difference everyday. Walking into a District #118 school and asking staff, faculty or a student will confirm that fact. But quietly, they come out a few at a time, recruiting friends, neighbors, children, family and strangers to support activities in the city of Belleville. Since the 06-07 members began service in August, they have served at over 30 projects, contributing over 250 hours to events, non-profits and after-school functions. Members have also recruited and supported over 54 volunteers serving a little over 125 hours.

To support the AmeriCorps goals of sustainability and civic engagement, members in Belleville exemplify what it means to help their community help themselves. While welcoming help on National Service Days like Make a Difference Day, members also introduce the community to non-profits making a big difference in Belleville. Volunteers serve Neighbors for Renewal, currently rehabbing a home to make into a food pantry; Share Food, on a huge upswing for the holidays; After-School Teen Reach at the Franklin Neighborhood Community Association, teaching various classes; Family Reading Nights and Fall Festivals at the area schools; Belleville Main Street projects like Fusion Street Festival and Old Town Market; and litter control on a portion of highway in Belleville adopted by members in 2004.

If you'd like to learn more about member assistance in training, recruiting and supporting volunteers or if you'd like to volunteer with a group in Belleville, please contact us at 618-235-2700 ext 5711 or visit our website @ www.swic.edu/ameriCorps for current project listings.



Illinois LeaderCorps by Pakita Eckford, Lori Goessling & staff

LeaderCorps is a member organized council that serves as a liaison between AmeriCorps programs throughout the state and the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The council was developed in order to open up the lines of communication between the various programs and encourage AmeriCorps alumni to stay involved in community service. In addition to their responsibilities with their respective AmeriCorps programs, members of Illinois LeaderCorps must attend additional trainings and assist in facilitating trainings within their own programs. Each participating program may have up to two members, and the Belleville AmeriCorps members for 2006-2007 are Pakita Eckford, who is serving as a multi-subject tutor at West Junior High, and Lori Goessling, who is serving as a volunteer coordinator with the Franklin Neighborhood Community Association.

Pakita is an August 2006 graduate of Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science/Pre-law in three years and plans to attend law school following her AmeriCorps service. Lori is a May 2006 graduate of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, with a degree in Social Studies Education. She plans to be a middle school Social Studies teacher.

Lori and Pakita will be focusing in the upcoming months on organizing and recruiting volunteers to support various service projects in conjunction with National and Global Youth Service Day (N&GYSD), April 20-22. AmeriCorps members across the state of Illinois will be joining together in an effort to get youth to participate in volunteer projects addressing the environment. To share ideas, get involved, or gain more information, contact Pakita.Eckford@swic.edu or Lori Goessling at 233-1710 or Lori.Goessling@swic.edu

Growing Community Support

By—Kristen Henke, Lori Goessling and staff

Franklin Neighborhood Community Association (FNCA) provides supplemental instruction and youth development and neighborhood strengthening activities to the Franklin Neighborhood. Managing a morning study club and after-school tutoring and specialty classes three days a week, along with Saturday ISAT preparation, the extension of the school has become a welcomed and expected component to the school day for Franklin students. The array of programming is supported by community members, AmeriCorps members, and McKendree College students. Beyond the after-school activities, FNCA also sponsors a Junior Optimist Club for fourth through sixth grade students and offers a school store rewarding students with items purchased from tickets they earned for making positive choices. New to FNCA this year is the St. Louis Zoo Outreach program. Students at Franklin have participated in various programming from the zoo.

This idea of a comprehensive program addressing out of school time that has become part of the fabric of the Franklin school is being applied—for the first time—to the Henry Raab School. FNCA leaders are slowly developing a network of support to meet the needs of the small neighborhood school. With the assistance of AmeriCorps volunteer coordinators, Henry Raab students have enjoyed some of the same fun and engaging activities as Franklin students. Several of the new programs show early success proving a true collaborative effort by FNCA and Henry Raab neighbors, students, and staff. The

unique contributions of the various organizations and individuals involved in the FNCA programs result in quality programming for students and neighbors.

Henry Raab has been able to offer its students more help, before school and during school. The FNCA employees have graciously donated their time, ideas, and money to help Henry Raab begin similar programs. The morning Homework Club is the first program started at Henry Raab. An average of ten students are working with four faculty members on their unfinished homework or getting extra practice in trouble areas. Twelve students and fifteen adults attended the SHRINE brunch for the honors program. The school store will open in January at Henry Raab and will operate the same way as Franklin's. Henry Raab will also join Franklin for the last three skating sessions of the school year. Both schools provided a safe alternative to Halloween by hosting a Safe Stop at their respective schools. Students joined in games and activities and, of course, received treats. Additionally, Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets were provided to families, as needed.

Having an insight as the volunteer coordinator at Henry Raab, I can see that FNCA has made an enormous difference at Henry Raab in just one semester. They are able to provide us with resources we would not otherwise have, and, in turn, we are able to provide the kids with more assets to help them succeed. It also shows them that someone values them and is rooting for their success, which helps them to believe in themselves.

Member Fun Facts

She comes all the way from Oregon and is currently a student at McKendree College in the Sociology department. She had a late start in finding us therefore she joined the program a little later. This hasn't impacted her ability to jump in and lend a hand. She is working hard as a tutor at Abraham Lincoln School. When asked about a fun fact or two worthy of newsprint, she responded with a variety of interesting statements. "The only kind of soda I like is 7-up, although I only like it if it's flat and at room temperature. I enjoy knitting and scrap booking. My favorite band is Dave Matthews Band. I'm afraid of ladybugs" (yes, she said ladybugs). "My favorite color is green. My favorite t.v. show is Seinfeld. I lived in Panama for seven months as an exchange student during my junior year of high school." Can you guess who this is?

Another member has a long history with a local elementary school. They were eager to welcome her as a member. When asked about fun facts, she shared, "I make handmade tie-dye clothing and hand woven hemp jewelry. My products are available at Sunshine daydream, Beatniks, The Bronx Zoo and Squibs retro Emporium. I have also participated in Belleville's Fusion street festival and the Strange Folk Festival in O'Fallon this past summer. My enjoyable "Summer Job" was very successful last year." Can you guess who this is? Her products can be viewed online at www.myspace.com/reverberate_tie_dye

Answers can be found on page six.



Belleville AmeriCorps Facts



Current Belleville AmeriCorps members are serving elementary and middle schools within Belleville School District #118, the Franklin Neighborhood Community Association, Community Kindness Re-Sale Shop, and Southwestern Illinois College's Reading Increases Student Excellence (RISE) Program. Two full-time, seventeen part-time, three reduced part-time, and three quarter-time members have pledged their services. For full-time members this means completing 1700 hours of service, while the other positions complete 900, 675, and 450 respectively. Additional positions requiring 300 hours of service will be available for persons interested in the stipend and education award in exchange for service during the summer.

What do members receive in exchange for all of their hard work?

Full-Time—members earn a living allowance worth \$10,900, plus an educational award of \$4,725 at the end of the service year, and are eligible for individual health care coverage. **Part-time**—members earn a living allowance worth \$5,768, plus an educational award of \$2,363.00 at the end of the service year. **Minimum-time**—members will earn \$2,885 and an educational award worth \$1,000.

Applications for the minimum time summer camp members will be accepted during April and May with positions beginning in early June. And, it is not too late to submit an application for federal work-study positions or quarter-time positions. Service for such positions will begin in January, 2007.

Quarterly Feature—In their own words words

"All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten"

By Margaret Bruns

When I began my job as a reading coach at Roosevelt Elementary School, I really had no idea what to expect. My job title was "reading coach," but I had a feeling that my role at Roosevelt would encompass much more than that! This turned out to be true when I was assigned to assist in one of the kindergarten classrooms for the first week of school. The kindergarteners were experiencing Roosevelt for the first time, and I was needed to help corral them for the first few days until they became used to the routine.

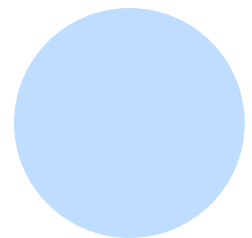
This turned out to be the perfect place for me to start out as a tutor because I was experiencing many of the same feelings as these young students were! Both the kindergarteners and I were nervous about starting out at a new place, but at the same time, we were both excited by all of the possibilities that a new place presents. Just as the kindergarteners needed plenty of guidance from their teacher about how things were done at Roosevelt school, I found these discussions helpful as well. In fact, I felt a special bond with this particular class as if we had gone through some sort of initiation together.

In the second week of school, the kindergarten teacher that I had been assigned to experienced a sudden death in her family and had to be absent for several days. This must have seemed scary to the kindergarteners who were so new to the school experience and had

barely gotten to know one teacher before they were presented with a substitute. I continued to work in this class, helping the substitute teacher with all of the idiosyncrasies of each child and trying to ensure that the students were given as much consistency as possible while their teacher was gone. While helping the sub, I realized how much I had learned from this class in such a short time and how much the students had come to know me and depend on having me in their classroom.

Now, months later, I am helping children of all grade levels at Roosevelt, but I still have a soft spot for the kindergarteners that I had come to know so well. What I learned from the kindergarten class about how the students are expected to conduct themselves and how things should be done has translated well to my experiences with other grade levels, along with the high level of encouragement and praise that kindergarten teachers give their students. And I have found that the fifth grade students seek the same praise and validation that the kindergarteners did—and have the same appreciation for stickers! This experience has given me new meaning for the phrase "All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten" because these lessons on how to give praise and encouragement, how to "play nice" together, and how to solve personal conflicts has carried over into the rest of my work with students and has made me a better nurturer and tutor.

"I want to share with others how important a positive attitude is. You can accomplish anything with the right attitude ..."
--Deb Schachner, Alumnus



NATIONAL and GLOBAL
YOUTH SERVICE DAY

April 20-22, 2007

Belleville AmeriCorps invites you to
participate in youth-driven environmentally
focused projects during April

For more information or to share project ideas, please contact Lori
Goessling or Pakita Eckford, Belleville AmeriCorps LeaderCorps
Representatives.

Email suggestions to:

Lori.Goessling@swic.edu (FNCA)

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*Getting Things
Done!*

Crossing the Eads Bridge...

In support of a local alumnus, community members and AmeriCorps members crossed the Eads Bridge on November 18, 2006. Hiking cross country to raise awareness about service and to raise funds to build a library in Kenya, former Belleville AmeriCorps member and O'Fallon resident, Debbie Schachner, met with fellow supporters as she hiked the Eads Bridge and made her way to O'Fallon. Debbie is taking a break this winter from her journey that originally began in California and has followed the American Discovery Trail to the St. Louis area. After a short respite she will resume her hike and continue traveling to Delaware. An impassioned and dedicated young woman, Debbie has met with countless service organizations across the country, sharing her vision and her enthusiasm. She has collected over \$30,000 in support of the library project. Debbie plans to return to Kenya for the development of the proposed library. A local fundraiser, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, will be held during January at the O'Fallon Hall. For more information about Debbie's journey, visit www.walkingwithfaith.com

A Look Ahead...

Be sure to mark your calendars for upcoming events. Activities open to the general community include:

Neighbors for Renewal, Saturdays in 2007

Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities in January

And more to come ...

If Alumni or others are interested in supporting training and other activities, please contact the office at 618-235-2700 ext 5709, Julie and ext 5711, Mandy.

Answers to Fun Fact questions: Courtney Brown is from Oregon. She is a tutor at Abe Lincoln. Shenee Booth makes tie-dye clothing and serves at Union School as a tutor.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.swic.edu/amicorps
