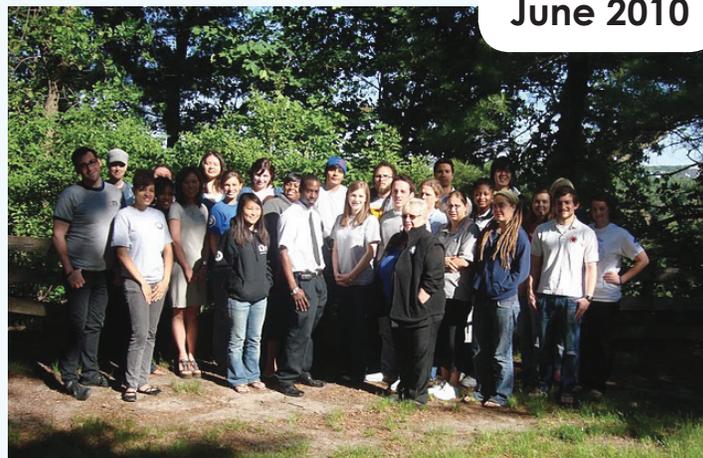


The mission of Illinois LeaderCorps is to connect AmeriCorps Members and programs from across Illinois, to facilitate planning of state, national and global days of service, and promote continued AmeriCorps alumni involvement.



2009-2010 LeaderCorps at Starved Rock State Park

A Message from the President



Hello AmeriCorps Alumni,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the inaugural issue of the *Alumni Agenda*. Allison Payne, LeaderCorps Vice President and Alumni Committee Chair, has been hard at work with her Committee in order to devise a plan to better reach those who have served before us and continue to dedicate their lives to service, AmeriCorps alumni.

As National AmeriCorps Week draws to a close and most service years come to an end, current AmeriCorps members are taking stock of their experiences, and reflecting upon their year of service. The 2009-2010 LeaderCorps members recently took stock of their service year at our end of the year retreat, held at Starved Rock State Park in Utica, IL. We prepared to transition our organization to a new set of LeaderCorps members, as many of our members will soon become AmeriCorps alumni. We are currently searching for a way to engage and help current alumni stay involved with AmeriCorps and provide them with meaningful service and professional opportunities. I encourage you to share your knowledge and I am eager to hear your service stories – please feel free to contact me at alex@schulerfoundation.org.

As AmeriCorps alumni, you have answered the call for service in your community, to continue serving or to find new service opportunities please visit Serve Illinois (www.serve.illinois.gov) or Serve.gov (www.serve.gov).

Sincerely,

Alexandra Byrd
Illinois LeaderCorps, President
Scholar Coach, Schuler Scholar Program

A Message from the Chair

Greetings Alumni,

I am also pleased to introduce the inaugural issue of the *Alumni Agenda*. In the following pages, you will find information on LeaderCorps, AmeriCorps in Illinois and AmeriCorps alumni. I hope that this newsletter not only provides you with information, but also serves as a reminder of our commitment to service. If you haven't already visited serve.illinois.gov or serve.gov, please take a moment to explore the thousands of ways to give back to your communities.

This newsletter would not have been completed without the time and effort from the Alumni Committee and the other LeaderCorps Officers. I thank you all for assisting me with this final project, so that we could complete the program year with one last hurrah. I wish all the AmeriCorps alumni the best of luck, and I look forward to all that can be accomplished by the future Alumni Committee, as well as Illinois AmeriCorps alumni—23,000 strong and counting.

Yours in service,

Allison Payne
Illinois LeaderCorps,
Vice President and Alumni Committee Chair

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois,
AmeriCorps Member



LeaderCorps is...

a member-organized council that connects AmeriCorps programs and acts as a liaison between members and the Serve Illinois Commission.



The Committees

Marketing and Outreach

The LeaderCorps Marketing and Outreach Committee has been hard at work this year to improve communication between AmeriCorps programs throughout the state of Illinois. Through the creation of the LeaderCorps organization, programs have been linked together to provide support, services, resources, partnerships and countless other opportunities for one another. Through the Marketing and Outreach Committee's efforts LeaderCorps can facilitate that exchange and uphold communication within the organization. This year the Committee has created a Google Group and Facebook Group that has acted as a data archival system for LeaderCorps – from documents to service photos, these networks have allowed us to maintain information pertaining to our service years and to disseminate information to our fellow AmeriCorps members. The Marketing and Outreach Committee also produces the *LeaderCorps Link*, LeaderCorps' quarterly newsletter, providing information about service projects and program updates to AmeriCorps members. Next year, the Marketing and Outreach Committee hopes to continue to increase publicity surrounding national days of service, including Martin Luther King Jr. Day and National AmeriCorps Week, and help AmeriCorps programs utilize their local press. For more information pertaining to the Marketing and Outreach Committee or to read the *LeaderCorps Link*, please log onto the Serve Illinois website.

National Days of Service

The National Days of Service Committee has contributed greatly throughout this service year. Micaela Moran, National Days of Service Coordinator, has led the Committee to complete several initiatives and projects. A major accomplishment was the work completed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. The Committee assisted programs with planning, provided reflection exercises, and collected data for the Serve Illinois Commission. Data from MLK Day was posted on the Serve website. The Committee also was integral during National AmeriCorps Week, during which the Committee organized and assisted with several recruitment fairs in the state of Illinois. The Committee ended the year with a Service Cookbook, which includes information on past and on-going service projects.

Alumni

The purpose of the Alumni Committee is to positively network with Illinois AmeriCorps alumni. Networking can be completed by using the Serve Illinois database of AmeriCorps alumni to make contact, at least, once per service year; interpreting survey data and/or collecting data; and corresponding with other AmeriCorps Alumni organizations, such as AmeriCorps Alums and/or other State LeaderCorps Alumni Committees. This year's Committee utilized data that was collected by previous Alumni Committees to plan and organize this newsletter. The Committee has worked hard to lay the groundwork for the success of subsequent Committees by updating the LeaderCorps Bylaws and creating a manual to be passed on and updated by future Committee members.

LeaderCorps Officers

President

Alexandra Byrd
Schuler Scholar Program

Vice President/Alumni Chair

Allison Payne
Literacy Volunteers of Illinois

National Days of Service Coordinator

Micaela Moran
Project Yes!



Members at Starved Rock State Park receive instruction for their visitor center beautification service project.

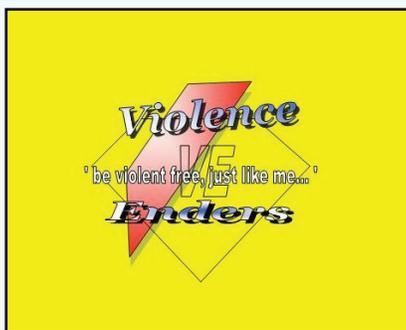
LeaderCorps convened for two three-day conferences, once in the fall in Springfield and once in the spring at Starved Rock State Park in Utica. During the conferences, members received leadership training, completed service projects and networked with other program representatives.

Members also meet once a month during a conference call to discuss upcoming events, committee plans and Serve Illinois updates.

LeaderCorps Member Special Projects: Violence Enders by Patricia Crowell

On February 1st 2010, Violence Enders was born at Kennedy Middle School. A group of students, 6th, 7th and 8th graders, who were already involved in a group called the KMS News Team, led by Mr. Jim Ambruoso, also became the school's first peace advocates. Kennedy Middle School has had its share of disruptive behaviors, which generate fights and create unrest in the hallways. Kennedy is a beautiful Middle School located in a rural setting on the Northwest side of Rockford, Illinois. Kennedy is one of the nicest buildings in District 205 to house our middle students, but inside daily unrest often becomes the norm.

As an AmeriCorps member, I am affiliated with the Winnebago County Health Department that serves as my Host Site. I am also the Chair of the Governance Team which is governing body of The Violence Prevention Collaborative. As an AmeriCorps member, I have been placed at Kennedy Middle School to teach The "Second Step" Anti-bullying program. As an addendum to this program, we were able to use some grant monies and the enthusiasm of two Adult Ad-



visors, as well as great group of committed young people to create what is now known as the Violence Enders. We meet once or twice a week and discuss ways to involve more students and gain new members, all while promoting peace.

We have only been operational for a few months, but we feel we are making a difference. We have done many, many things to promote our group and peace at Kennedy. We have purchased a button-making machine and pro-



Violence Enders Awards Banquet

duced buttons with our logo on it and a tag line "Be violence free like me." We purchased uniform shirts that have embroidered on them "Violence Enders Kennedy Middle School" on one side and "Student Advisors" on the other. The double use of the uniform shirts turned out to be brilliant, in that the students stay in compliance with the school dress code, and, at the same time, send a message of peace and help to anyone who desires it. We have a large story board with beautiful photos and relevant information for those who want to become a part of the group. This story board was created by one of our Advisors, Mr. Ambruoso. His contributions have been the back bone for our group, with his computer and technology expertise and knowledge of photography. Our students also have photo business cards to hand out to those



(left to right) Violence Enders Staff Advisors, Ms. Perrin and Jim Ambruoso. LeaderCorps member, Patricia Crowell.

they want to reach out to. Ms. Perrin, our other advisor is present at each and every meeting and makes sure all records are kept with accuracy. Ms. Perrin is instrumental in the forward movement of our group.

Our future plans are to grow and plant seeds of hope at high schools with our graduating 8th graders. Our immediate future plans are to have a fabulous celebration with students, parents, siblings, advisors and special guests, where we will honor our short but successful year. We will award prizes, give certificates, have a wonderful meal, give honor where honor is due, all in the name of peace. This program will continue to grow and succeed, due to the commitment of our students, advisors, administration, parents, AmeriCorps members and our local Health Department. Together, we will continue to set examples of how to promote peace and live in a caring environment. We invite all who will to join us in our efforts, as we make plans this summer for an awesome 2010-2011 school year.

For information on Violence Enders, visit the Kennedy Middle School website at <http://webs.rps205.com/schools/kennedy/>

Where are they now? *Catching Up with AmeriCorps Alumni*



Sarah Buttimer
Belleville AmeriCorps '07

Some people know exactly what they want to do in life. For the vast majority of us, however, finding a profession often takes time and is complicated by unexpected twists and turns. Often, we find our calling purely by accident. AmeriCorps Alumnus, Sarah Buttimer, found her calling in just such a manner. Sarah joined AmeriCorps at the sug-

gestion of friends and, at the time, she did not really know much about the program. She was working for a local grocery store and willingly admits that "I just needed money." During her first service year, Sarah was placed at an elementary school and assisted Kindergarten through 6th grade teachers with teaching Learning Disabled (LD) students and reading programs. Little did she know that what had started as a pragmatic pursuit of income would grow into a three-year commitment (2004-2007). Sarah attributes her spark of interest to one particular moment. While meeting the staff, Sarah caught a glimpse of the 5th grade teacher and was captivated by his rapport with his students. In other words, she was hooked! Over time, she found she really enjoyed the work and couldn't help but develop a deep desire to see every child succeed – a wonderful gift, a heavy burden and,

certainly, a challenge in the underserved neighborhood in which she worked. She discovered that despite the efforts of her students and their families, the proverbial deck was often stacked decidedly against their favor. Still, Sarah maintains her desire to teach and will be completing a Masters in Education this year.

As an alumnus, Sarah had some advice for members who are just starting their service year: flexibility is key; don't give up; offer to help and be available; and keep promises to students.

Overall, Sarah calls her experience "great" and continues to get things done for America.

*-Submitted by Stephen Kielbasa,
Belleville AmeriCorps*



Guadalupe Silva
Jumpstart '08, '09

What attracted me to becoming an AmeriCorps member was the opportunity to work with children.

My best memories from my experience with AmeriCorps is watching the children achieve the confidence and boost they need in order to be excited about school and learning.

My experience with AmeriCorps made me seek out new opportunities to help out in my community. It led me to get more involved with community issues.

Since my term with AmeriCorps, I have been working with urban youth on violence prevention.



Joseph Reid
*PCC Community Wellness Center '08
LeaderCorps Alumni Chair '08*

AmeriCorps was where I first realized my passion for working with disadvantaged populations. I gained immeasurable experience providing outreach to at-risk individuals and families and was exposed to the importance of teamwork, solidarity, and leadership within a healthcare facility while at PCC.

After my year of service, I accepted a position as a health educator for a Chicago nonprofit respiratory organization. With this job, I have been able to continue working with underserved populations for which the basic goals of self-empowerment and self-management, all established in AmeriCorps, continue to underlie everything I do. Moreover, I've gained valuable experience working with a team in the fast-paced, dynamic environment of a hospital system, again, whose foundation was built during AmeriCorps.

In June, I am enrolling in a Masters Nursing program at Rush University.

As a former Alumni Chair, I would like to see a continued push to engage former members to honor their pledge to continue service after AmeriCorps and perhaps the establishment of some type of mentor program that promotes interaction between current members and alumni.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: UIC AMERICORPS PROJECT MORE

(MAKING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR READING ENRICHMENT)

Program Focus

Family Literacy
Adult Education
Financial Literacy
Early Childhood Resources



THE PROGRAM

Program goals:

The Center for Literacy and Project MORE are committed to family literacy and developing lifelong learning skills for Head Start and child care parents and strengthening Chicago's commitment to early childcare and education. The program promotes children's success in school and encourages economic self-sufficiency in families.

Population served:
Adults/parents 18+

Program information:

UIC AmeriCorps Project MORE provides several programs to Head Start parents at our six locations throughout Chicago-area Head Start sites, such as: English as a Second Language classes, GED classes and tutoring, computer literacy courses, financial literacy and family literacy workshops.

THE AMERICORPS YEAR OF SERVICE

Current AmeriCorps members:
17 full-time members (1700 hours); 10 minimum-time members (300 hours)

During the year of service:
Depending on site placement,

members provide the following:

- Financial literacy workshops for Head Start Parents;
- Distribution of financial literacy resources to parents;
- Tutoring for multi-level adult learners in GED classes;
- Tutoring for parents in English as a Second Language;
- Computer literacy instruction;
- Family literacy workshops;
- Job training and skills development workshops for parents;
- Guided access tours and early childhood resources for parents;
- Service projects in the community;
- Support for parent enrollment, volunteer recruitment, patron tracking, and record keeping, and recognition events for parents.

AmeriCorps training received:

- Information session, telephone interview, three-day screening, pre-AmeriCorps volunteer day at sites to learn in detail about the program sites, staff, and goals;
- Orientation week covering Project MORE Member handbook and activities;
- Site specific on-going training on member roles, duties (tutoring techniques, activities, etc.);
- Weekly on-site team training meetings;
- Bi-weekly full-time corps trainings

on topics such as: computer skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), conflict resolution, civic reflection, citizenship, cultural diversity, CPR, nutrition, Life after Service, and others. Members who tutor receive additional Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language training through the Literacy Works organization.

Want to know MORE?

Contact:
Ruby Camacho
Program Coordinator
rcamac1@uic.edu

Project MORE
1040 W. Harrison #1223 (M/C 147)
Chicago, IL 60607

312-355-4227
<http://www.uic.edu/educ/cfl/ameri-corps.html>

AmeriCorps Project MORE



2010 Illinois LeaderCorps Programs & LeaderCorps Representatives

ABC AmeriCorps | Christi Buttron
Alternatives, Inc. | Chelsea Clammer
American Red Cross | Megan McCarthy
American Red Cross McHenry County | William Wetzel
Asian Human Services | Jonathan Sung
AUSL | Leah Guenther
Belleville AmeriCorps | Stephen Kielbasa
Big Brothers Big Sisters | Jaci Entwisle
Boys & Girls Club of Central Illinois | Tiffany Williams
CAAAELII | Sonya De La Torre
Children's Home Association of Illinois | Joy McFadden
City Year Chicago | Kyle Mahoney
Cra-La-Wa Volunteers Probation, Inc. | Jessi Goff
F.O.R.U.M | Clyde Thomas
Greater Chicago Food Depository | Brittany Potter
Illinois Central College | Hong Rickett
Illinois Public Health Association | Patricia Crowell
Jumpstart | Lindsey Sturch
Land of Lincoln AmeriCorps | William Ryan
Lessie Bates | Rita Doublin
Literacy Volunteers of Illinois | Allison Payne
Logan Square Neighborhood Association | Quiletta Jordan
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois | Amanda McKenzie
McHenry County | Miguel Solis
PCC Community Wellness Center | Jacob Smith
Peace Corps Fellows WIU | Jessica Wade
Project MORE | Annaly Pardino
Project Yes! | Micaela Moran
Public Allies Chicago | Scott Spiegler
Schuler Scholar Program | Alex Byrd
Southeastern IL Juvenile Justice Council Project | April Hightshoe
Springfield Urban League, Inc. | Blake Johnson
Urbana-Champaign Media Center | Jacob Barton
West Suburban PADS | Shavora Steward

Red = LeaderCorps Alumni Committee Member
Alumni Committee Advisor | Shane Caterino, Director, AUSL

AMERICORPS ★ ALUMS

AmeriCorps Alums is a network of over half a million AmeriCorps alumni. The benefits of joining include career resources and opportunities, educational information—including how to use your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award and where to find schools that match the award, free tax preparation, and how to become involved with action being taken to eliminate the taxation of your Education Award.

If you are not already registered, you can register by visiting their website. Once registered, you may join state and/or city Chapters. Chapters provide information on networking events, service projects and more.

For information on AmeriCorps Alums, visit www.americorpsalums.org.



Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Find a Volunteer Opportunity in Illinois!

Visit serve.illinois.gov, where you'll find over 60,000 volunteer opportunities. The Serve Illinois website is also host to a variety of volunteer resources:

- AmeriCorps/National Service Information: http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/national_service.aspx
- Volunteerism Research and Publications: <http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/Trends.aspx>
- Statewide Volunteer Management Network: <http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/network.aspx>
- Related Nonprofit and Volunteerism Web Links: <http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/links.aspx>
- Serve Illinois Calendar of Events: <http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/calendar.aspx>