



ST. PAUL'S AMERICORPS PROGRAM
Paterson, New Jersey

News Beats

At St. Paul's CDC

Issue #1

"To engage, inform, and inspire."

March 24, 2010

Opening Statement for Newsletter

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

by Chris John



Above: AmeriCorps Recovery members Chris John and Alex Soto pose in front of words of wisdom from J.F.K.

Greetings! Thanks to all your thoughtful contributions and insightful perspective, it is with the utmost enthusiasm that Alex and I unveil to you the first issue of our AmeriCorps Newsletter, "News Beats!" The idea for "NewsBeats" grew out of many conversations between members who wanted to find a proper avenue for expressing their energy and pride in serving here at St. Paul's CDC. Its mission is clear and simple: "To engage, inform, and inspire." We hope to achieve this by communicating the great work we all are doing in a clear, comprehensive, and hopefully, fun way.

With this being our introductory newsletter, in keeping in theme with any introduction, you will also see team leaders have made it a point to personally introduce their team members. Through these introductions, we hope you will gain a better understanding of the amazingly diverse and important work that all 28 of us are doing in the community.

Along with sections ranging from site reports and spotlight articles to personal remarks and messages from our administration, News Beats diverse format is purposely designed in hopes "to engage, inform, and inspire" on a multitude of levels. Our ultimate hope is that when you read "News Beats," you will be reminded to challenge those you interact with to be better; you are the force that creates an impact in the lives of others; only you can make this community a better one, and it's up to you to make it a greater place. It is through the power of that belief that we achieve extraordinary results when we work together. Thank you again for contributing to "NewsBeats," and thank you for your willingness to work together in belief of a common vision. Enjoy!

Mr. Williams' Corner

Keep Up The Good Work! By Richard Williams, AmeriCorps Director

First, let me say how excited I am to see that we have developed a program newsletter! My thanks go out to all who had a hand in crafting its design and submitting items to be published. Being able to share the good news of the service work that you are accomplishing here at St. Paul's CDC and our partner agencies is critically important to generating the support necessary to continue these efforts after you have moved on to other important facets of your lives in public service.

It is no secret that your presence here at St. Paul's allows us to double, if not triple, our efforts to serve northern New Jersey residents in need. In 2009, St. Paul's CDC was privileged to work with 45 AmeriCorps volunteers who provided over 20,000 hours of community service and earned over \$31,000 in educational awards. As of the publishing of this inaugural newsletter, there are 29 of you making a difference, serving at 8 different partner agencies, across two counties, and 4 St. Paul's CDC program sites. Just within this contract period (beginning September 2009), your efforts have allowed us to leverage the support of 392 additional volunteers who have supported over 6 service events that you helped organize.

I cannot thank you enough for your service, and I look forward to continuing to sing your praises in future newsletters as you continue to Get Things Done.

Keep up the good work!

AmeriCorps After Hours. by Jamie Dobie

Twenty AmeriCorps gathered together this past Saturday night at El Mexicano Restaurant and Lounge for a night of rice, beans, conversation and dancing. We're looking forward to our next event!

An upcoming AmeriCorps social gathering is in the works to Jacksonville's Comedy Club in Paterson. More information to come!



Team Leader Time

St. Paul's Afterschool Program by Patti Sica, Team Leader



Above: AmeriCorps member Adneris Vasquez joins in the festivities with a child from the Afterschool program.

Here at St. Paul's Afterschool Program, we AmeriCorps members are so busy, we barely have time to text during work. Our team brings an array of experience and boundless energy to keep up with our awesome kids. Alex Soto wows our students with his sweet art skillz, budding epicurean delights, and a fierce dodgeball attitude. Adneris Vazquez is always ready to translate when parents come in to complain (just kidding!) and our students salivate over her bangin' puertorriqueno home cooking. Erica Freeman, our latest addition, is an ESL whiz, has a never-ending stock of worksheets in her back pocket, and has an extensive knowledge of current animated films. What more can you ask for in a group of staff members? Come meet all these amazing people, play with cute kids, and taste foods from all around the world at our International Dinner, April 8th

St. Paul's Partnerships for Healthy Living Program by Sandra Corpuz, Team Leader



In a typical day, three AmeriCorps members can be found running St. Paul's Partnerships for Healthy Living (PHL) Program: Marlene Williams, Latoya Capers and Sandra Corpuz. We can be found working with clients, out doing outreach or organizing our resources. As AmeriCorps members, we are able to be involved in efforts that serve the community. Established AmeriCorps events such as Adopt-a-Family have been organized through the PHL office. Last year over 500 families were given a brighter holiday with gifts provided by generous donors in the community. A long term project underway is the production of a "Smart Book," modeled after one put out by Passaic County that will function as a resource for current and future Case Management Aide's as well as acting as a tool for individuals.

Left: PHL members Latoya Capers, Marlene Williams, and Sandra Corpuz find a moment to strike a pose.

St. Paul's Food Pantry By Kamilah Belton, Team Leader



In the St. Paul's Food Pantry, we have five AmeriCorps volunteers. Our job assignments provide many services for the food pantry clients. When clients arrive, they are directed to our computer intake workers Kamilah Belton and Adneris Vazquez, where they must provide necessary documentation. Chris John drives the food pantry van to deliver food to the elderly and disabled who are unable to visit our food pantry. Mike Diaz and Jordan Blakney work on the food stamp program where our clients can fill out an application to see if they can be eligible for additional food stamp benefits. Jordan takes the information provided and puts it into the computer and clients receive an appointment date to review their food stamp benefits if their application qualifies. Overall the food pantry is a very busy place for AmeriCorps volunteers.

Left: AmeriCorps members Adneris Vasquez and Jordan Blakney help make food boxes for clients in the food pantry.

St. Paul's Recovery Program by Chris John, Team Leader

The St. Paul's CDC Recovery Program is comprised of 11 creative, ambitious members who make their impact visible every day across Passaic County. After six months of grueling preparation, **Carlotta Smith** and **Chris John** recently launched a six week project, facilitating volunteers to offer free tax assistance to low-income families throughout the county. **Diana Vasquez** and **Lisa Vilchez** at Paterson's Habitat for Humanity recently celebrated their chapter's 25th anniversary of providing homes for low income families. We also have five members working in various capacities at four different faith-based groups in the community - **Ashley Porter** over at the Madison Ave. Crossroads Community Ministry and **Mario Benitez** at the Paterson Ave/Madison Park Methodist Church do everything from helping out with the after-school program to aiding the church food pantries. **Stacy Pillette** and **Amrita Singh** at Catholic Family & Community Services work with the elderly, providing curbside medical assistance and coordinating social activities, like movie and bingo nights. Then there is **Jesideh Kannah** at the Episcopal Community Development who aims to give every resident of Essex County a shot at the American Dream through providing low-income housing for sale or rent. We welcome our newest member, **Jamie Dobie**, who will be working with 25 students at Eastside High School to map youth-friendly resources in the Sandy Hill neighborhood. To round out the team, our in-house computer graphics kingpin **Alex Soto** has revamped the branding of our AmeriCorps logo all over the Recovery office walls along with inspirational quotes, as well as working hard on the St. Paul's e-mail newsletter. In case visitors to the office didn't know who we were, they do now and, yes, recovery does lead the way.



Above: AmeriCorps Recovery member Carlotta Smith helps a client out filing their income tax return.

St. Paul's Next Step Program by Veronica Young, Team Leader

Five AmeriCorps members continue to support St. Paul's Next Step Program. Three members act as Teacher's Aides: **Maricel Vazquez**, **MaryAnna Calotta**, and **Veronica Young**. Maricel assists in the ESL class; MaryAnna assists in the Basic Education classes; and Veronica assists in the GED class. Recently, some of our Adult Education Team attended the GED to College Writing Workshop for Literacy Educators, a workshop that enhanced our writing curriculum. One AmeriCorps member, **Nereida Bello**, recently began her journey as a Case Management and Outreach Aide. Previously placed as a Teacher's Aide, Nereida is now doing referrals to clients regarding social services. Another essential part of our team is **Stephanie Ward**, who acts as Job Developer. Stephanie recently planned a field trip for our clients to attend the William Paterson University Job Fair and sat with each individual client to develop their resume and prepare their interview skills.



Above: AmeriCorps Next Step member Veronica Young helps a student prepare for her GED exam.

*They said we couldn't be what we wanted to be
They said we couldn't change the environment
They said we couldn't change our community
They said we couldn't be a group that inspires
They said we also couldn't be a group that can change the world
They said we couldn't be a group of leaders*

But I stand here before you in this gray hooded sweatshirt, with the colors of red, black, blue, and white, and say to you all...

*That we can be a group of people that can change lives
That we can be a group that motivates people
That we can be a group that changes communities*

And for those that will see us, they will know we can be a group of leaders

*And I say, “Yes We Can” make a difference, because it starts now
It starts today and will continue as long as we continue to be a group that motivates communities and inspires people...*

For they said we couldn't...now I know that We can.



- **Latoya** plans to register and take the GED very soon. Let's all wish her luck.
- **Sandra** is doing hot yoga Sunday's and welcomes fellow participants.
- **Stacey's** daughter was recently accepted into NYU. Her family is very excited.
- **Kamilah** can't wait to party it up in Las Vegas for three weeks in April.
- **Jamie** has recently started up rock climbing.
- **Veronica** is anxiously waiting to here back from CCSU regarding graduate school. Let's all wish her luck.
- **Mike** is hosting a Wrestlemania 26 party at his house March 28th 7PM. All are welcome to attend.
- **Mike** is hosting a Mayweather vs. Mosely party at his house May 1. All are welcome to attend.
- **Erika** recently saw the film, “Remember Me” and would recommend it to everyone who likes romantic drama.
- **Nereida** is in the “Strive to Drive” Program, and will be eligible to receive her permit after taking the written test April 2nd. Let's all wish her luck.
- **Jamie** is very excited to soon be an aunt. It's still too early to tell if it's a boy or girl.
- **Patti** is very much looking forward to going to Miami to see family and spend time on South Beach for a week in April.
- **Adneris's** daughter is anxiously waiting to here if she was accepted into Rosa Parks High School. Let's all wish her luck.
- **Mr. Williams** recently finished listening to the audio verion of the book “Game Change,” and would recommend it to everyone who likes political drama.

Quote of the Newsletter

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

-Ghandi

News and Events

International Dinner

April 8, 5pm: Parish Hall

The After-School Program is hosting an international dinner to expand on our theme "All Around the World." Each team of children will choose a different country and learn about their culture and customs. We will explore various cultures by preparing meals of various cultures. You are all welcome to bring a dish and celebrate with us!

Contact: Patti Sica

Free Tax Preparation

Through April 15

Free Tax Preparation for individuals or married filers earning \$48,000 or less. The dates and location of this free service is as follows; there is no appointment necessary:

New Jersey Federal Credit Union (Paterson)

Through April 15

Tuesdays through Thursdays from 9am-4pm

Saturdays from 10am-1pm

Buckingham Adult Medical Day Care (Prospect Park)

Friday, April 9 from 9am-4pm

Clifton Adult Day Care (Clifton)

Friday, March 26 from 9am – 4pm

Church of the Nazarene (Passaic)

April 11 from noon to 4pm

Contact: Carlotta Smith or Chris John

Global Youth Service Day

April 23, 2010: Time & Venue TBD

Global Youth Service Day is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilizes the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through service and service-learning. On GYSD, children and youth address the world's most critical issues in partnership with families, schools, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, and governments.

Contact: A Service Leader for this year's event is still needed.

Operation Clean Sweep 2010

May 01, 8AM-1PM

St. Paul's CDC is joining forces in a collaborative effort to clean up the streets in the Sandy Hill/5th Ward section of Paterson. Last year, 90 residents and volunteers helped clean up a 10-block radius surrounding St. Paul's Community Development Corporation, while trucks from the city Department of Public Works picked up the garbage collected!

Contact: Chris John

Upcoming Training Dates:

Time & Venue: TBD

How to Get into the Job Market – April 14, 2010

Public Speaking – April 14 & 23, 2010

Facilitation Skills/Train-the-Trainer – April 23, 2010

Global Youth Service Day – April 23, 2010

News and Events Continued

In Other News...

AmeriCorps Recovery members **Diana Vazquez** and **Lisa Vilchez** recently helped celebrate Paterson's Habitat for Humanity's 25th Anniversary. About 290 people were in attendance, including sponsors, vendors, and current Paterson Habitat home owners. In particular, a family who became a first time home owner nearly 13 years ago had officially paid off their mortgage. Also, volunteers were honored this year: Wyckoff Reformed Church received the Dr. John Rosengren Award, Donna Brightman received the Reenstra Award, and Doris Ruiz received the Nettie Carter Award. As for the special 25th Anniversary awards, these awards were presented to Edward Smith and First Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, NJ.

AmeriCorps Recovery member **Jamie Dobie** is thrilled to be working with 25 students from East Side High School to implement the Sandy Hill Youth Mapping project. The project is part of a larger initiative by the organization Youthline America to create a national online database of opportunities for America's youth. Along with encouraging better use of already-existing resources, this information will hopefully be a valuable tool for identifying gaps in the community and the youth resources that are lacking. Thanks to a generous grant from Verizon, Paterson will be the first site in America to utilize handheld technology during youth mapping!



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