

THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE ON CRITICAL SOCIAL ISSUES

Getting Things Done

MAY 15-16, 2003



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Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) was founded in 2001 as a non-profit social change 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 civic engagement through service.

ICP supports the development of innovative programs and policies through a variety of strategies. Recent work includes developing pathways for young people who serve, building capacity through regional centers in Latin America and southern Africa, conducting research to assess the youth service policy environment worldwide, awarding small grants to support innovative youth service policy development around the world, and hosting national and international forums. ***ICP*** has worked with numerous universities, NGOs, national and local governments, and multilateral organizations in over twenty countries on six continents.

Foreword

BY SUSAN STROUD

This year, the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Corporation for National Service, is a time to reflect on the impact of national service in our nation. In recent years, a great deal of attention has been focused on the ways that national service encourages civic participation. The goal of this forum was to look further into another important purpose of service — to address unmet community needs.

Innovations in Civic Participation chose three critical social issues to provide the lens through which to examine how national service “gets things done.” We commissioned experts to synthesize existing research on the community impacts of national service, and to look at each of the three issue areas — youth development in out of school time, rural development, and independent living for seniors — to help us understand how service is both a useful tool and a strategy for meeting a broad range of critical social needs.

At our Forum on May 15–16, 2003, we convened more than 100 national service program leaders, experts in the fields of youth policy, rural development, and aging; policy makers; and government and private sector funders. Through two days of discussions, this group shared information about barriers, best practices and building an action agenda for the future, and began a dialogue to inform the shape and scope of future national service policies. The discussion is summarized in this report.

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Ford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Surdna Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Our cosponsors for the Forum were the National Council on the Aging, the National Collaboration for Youth, Rural LISC, AARP and the Grantmaker Forum for Community and National Service. We are deeply appreciative of their involvement and support. We also assembled a working group on each issue, the members of which were very helpful in fleshing out issues and connecting us with the key organizations and individuals in each issue community.

Many people contributed to the Forum and series of papers. We are particularly grateful to the authors of the papers — Shirley Sagawa, Deb Jospin, Lee Carpenter, Judy Karasik, and Tom Endres. In addition, Shirley Sagawa and Deb Jospin offered invaluable assistance with all aspects of the Forum — from helping to conceptualize the Forum to drafting this report. The staff of ICP, especially Erin Rodgers, was enormously valuable. Jean Hwang and Linda Marson lent their expertise in design and public affairs.

We consider this work to be the beginning, not the end, of a dialogue. We hope that this effort will inspire new thinking about an old idea — national service as a strategy “to get things done” — and create an agenda for collective advocacy and action on behalf of national service programs and policies.

Introduction

Over the last decade, national service has impacted the lives of countless Americans — including the 250,000 alumni of AmeriCorps and the millions of seniors and youth serving in their own communities. The positive effect of their efforts on the lives of others is a largely untold story. This year, the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Corporation for National and Community Service, is the time to look back and review the impacts of national service, as well as to think creatively about the future of national service as an important strategy for addressing critical issues in communities across the country.

To this end, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) undertook an initiative to explore the impact of national service on three critical social issues: youth development in out of school time, rural development, and independent living for seniors. First, ICP commissioned a series of papers providing a fresh look at the impact of national service in communities, as well as a first-ever examination of the impact and potential of national service in each of the three issue areas. Second, ICP hosted a national forum in Washington, D.C., on May 15 and 16, 2003, which brought together more than 100 national service program leaders, experts in the fields of youth policy, rural development, and aging, policy makers, government and private sector funders, and national service volunteers, many of whom did not know each other prior to the forum.

Over the two days in the International Trade Center, these national leaders heard from experts in each of the three issue areas, national service program directors, and policymakers. Through facilitated small group sessions,

they engaged in a rich dialogue about the ways in which national service volunteers are currently addressing issues related to youth development, rural development, and independent living. This meeting of minds engendered innovative ways to achieve greater impacts. Many participants left with new ideas, partnerships, and plans to advance the cause.

This report summarizes the major sessions of the Forum, lists the recommendations formulated by the participants in their small groups, and provides background information about the speakers as well as a roster of participants and a program directory*. What it does not capture are the many small conversations and informal agreements made among participants during the session breaks. In the end, these connections may be among the most important outcomes of the initiative.

ICP staff have developed a plan for future activities to continue the work begun in the Forum — to focus on national service as a strategy to address a broad range of important social issues. We also want to build on the efforts begun at the Forum to strengthen new constituencies for national service among the issue groups. The planned activities include three one-day sessions over the next year in three different locations across the U.S., each focusing on one of the issue areas addressed at the Forum. We will seek co-sponsoring organizations and funders to join us in the planning of this series of meetings. Late in 2004 we plan to hold a policy seminar in Washington, DC for policy makers to summarize the recommendations from the Forum and the follow up meetings, as a way of informing the legislative process.

* CD and email versions

The Global Service Institute defines national service as “an organized period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national, or world community, recognized and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant.”

NATIONAL SERVICE: Getting Things Done

What is National Service?

Susan Stroud opened the Forum with an introduction to programs funded by the Corporation for National Service, and the results of research regarding their impact.

‘National service’ is a phrase that has many different meanings for different people. In the US the term is sometimes used to describe full-time service programs that are sometimes linked to benefits, such as money for education and training. Military service is often included in this definition. Others consider national service to be service in government funded and run programs, such as programs funded by the Corporation for National Service, whether the program is full-time or part-time, stipended or uncompensated.

Defined broadly, national service in the US has figured in important priority efforts of many presidents, including **President Franklin Roosevelt’s** Civilian Conservation Corps, intended to provide jobs for unemployed youth who worked to enhance America’s national parks and other civic projects; **President Kennedy’s** Peace Corps, which addressed foreign policy objectives; its domestic counterpart, VISTA, created during the **Johnson** Administration as a part of the war on poverty, along with the Foster Grandparents program; and the Senior Companions Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and other older-American programs created during the **Nixon** administration as part of an effort to support productive aging.



Susan Stroud, executive director,
Innovations in Civic Participation

The last two decades have seen a dramatic expansion in government support for national service. **President George Bush** requested government funding for the Points of Light Foundation with the goal of encouraging more Americans to volunteer. This legislation also provided funding for a Commission on National and Community Service, which funded Congressionally-designed service-learning and youth corps programs, as well as a demonstration program for full- and part-time national service. **President Clinton** proposed the AmeriCorps program as a strategy to enable young people to earn

money for college or to pay back student loans through a year of full-time service or its part-time equivalent. His legislation created the Corporation for National Service (which consolidated the Commission on National and Community Service and the ACTION agency). During the Clinton Administration, service was a core strategy employed in the America Reads initiative to help all children read independently by third grade, as well as a part of disaster relief efforts and other initiatives. Most recently, **President George W. Bush** created the Freedom Corps, an initiative to engage service participants in homeland security efforts.

Today, most of these federal programs continue to receive government support. Federal support comes from several different agencies, including the Peace Corps, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which administers the *YouthBuild* program, and the Department of Education, whose *College Work Study* program mandates that colleges and universities use a portion of their funding for commu-

nity service placements. However, the *Corporation for National Service* is the only agency charged with engaging Americans of all ages and backgrounds in domestic, nonmilitary service to help strengthen communities. It provides funding for three major program categories:

- *Learn and Serve America* supports service-learning programs in schools and community organizations that help nearly one million students from kindergarten through college meet community needs, while improving their academic skills and learning the habits of good citizenship. Learn and Serve grants are used to create new programs or replicate existing programs, as well as to provide training and development to staff, faculty, and volunteers. Funding is provided through state education agencies, state commissions on national and community service, nonprofit organizations, Indian tribes, and U.S. territories, which then select and fund local service-learning programs. Institutions of higher education and consortia are funded directly.
- *Senior Corps* is a network of programs that tap the experience, skills, and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges. It includes three programs. RSVP, one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation, engages people 55 and over in a diverse range of volunteer activities. Approximately 480,000 volunteers serve an average of four hours a week at an estimated 65,000 local organizations through 766 RSVP projects. The *Foster Grandparents Program*, through its local grantees, enables income eligible individuals 60 and over to serve 20 hours per week in schools, hospitals, correctional institutions, daycare facilities, and Head Start centers. The more than 30,000 Foster Grandparents serve 275,000 young children and teenagers. They receive \$2.65 an hour for their service. The *Senior Companions Program* through its local grantees enables income eligible individuals 60 and over to serve 20 hours per week to provide assistance and friendship to adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as grocery shopping and bill paying. The 15,500 Senior Companions serve more than 61,000 adults. They receive \$2.65 an hour for their service.
- *AmeriCorps* is a network of national service programs that engage more than 50,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

AmeriCorps members serve through more than 2,100 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations. Full-time members receive living allowances, health care and child care benefits, and education awards of \$4,725 for each year of service (living allowances and education awards are available to part-time members on a pro-rated basis). AmeriCorps is made up of three programs:

- In *AmeriCorps*State and National*, more than three-quarters of grant funding goes to Governor-appointed State Commissions, which in turn distribute and monitor grants to local nonprofits and agencies. The other quarter goes to national nonprofits that operate in more than one state. The organizations receiving grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members. Between 1994 and 2003, a quarter of a million AmeriCorps members served through more than 2,100 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Clubs, public schools, and Head Start Centers.
- *AmeriCorps*VISTA* members serve full-time for a year in nonprofits, public agencies and faith-based groups to help lift individuals and communities out of poverty. Each year, about 6,000 AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve in 1,200 local programs selected by Corporation for National Service state offices.
- *AmeriCorps*NCCC* is a 10-month, full-time residential program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24, intended to combine the best practices of civilian service with the best aspects of military service. Members serve in teams of 10 to 15 members based at one of five campuses across the country but are sent to work on short-term projects in neighboring states. Approximately 1,200 members serve in AmeriCorps*NCCC each year.

Of course, not all organized service programs receive federal support. With funding from foundations, corporations, individuals, faith-based organizations, and state and local government, service programs are organized by nonprofit organizations sponsoring volunteer programs; faith-based organizations; civic organizations; employers; and others who see a role for volunteers in achieving their missions.

The Impact of National Service

Susan Stroud observed that of the Corporation's three major programs, *AmeriCorps* has by far received the most attention from Congress. As noted above, AmeriCorps members devote one to two years of full-time intensive service (or its part-time equivalent) to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. Some conservative members of Congress have opposed the living allowance and benefits received by AmeriCorps members. However, research¹ demonstrates that these benefits are critical to ensuring that low- and middle-income individuals are able to participate. The AmeriCorps education award has also proved controversial, although research shows that seven in ten AmeriCorps members say this award is necessary to achieve their educational goals, and it is an important recruitment tool.

The Forum focused not on member impacts, but on community impacts. Stroud outlined the findings of ICP's report, **National and Community Service: Ten Years of National Service**, which draws on research evidence and interviews of program directors to determine whether national service is successful in four important areas.

- First, the report found that national service *expanded programs* in communities across the country, serving millions of people, generating millions of volunteers, and providing service that far exceeds the cost of the program. For example, *Seniors for Schools*, with funding from the Senior Corps, recruited, trained, and supervised adults over the age of fifty-five to help children read. In the program's first three years, the seniors tripled the number of students receiving help

and doubled the number of its volunteers and the number of schools served.

- Second, national service participants deliver *high quality* service. Cross-cutting evaluations of AmeriCorps, K-12 and Higher Education Learn and Serve America, and all three major Senior Corps programs found that the programs have strong community impacts. For example, an independent evaluation of the Seniors for Schools program found that nearly 60% of the students increased their reading skills by one full level or more, and 40% were reading at their expected grade level by post-test — despite the fact that 94% of students tested had started the year below their expected reading level, some by two levels or more. 92% of all students tutored improved their reading skills. Tutoring programs conducted by AmeriCorps had similarly strong results.

In addition to delivering high quality services, some national service programs have played a role in *enabling professional service providers to enhance the quality of their programs*. For example, in the child care field, Plus Time New Hampshire AmeriCorps members organize information and education events for child care program staff, while AmeriCorps members serving through the Action for Children Today (ACT) program in Chapel Hill, North Carolina,

provide educational release time for teachers participating in an early childhood scholarship program.

In the field of independent living, a study of the Senior Companions Program found that the older volunteers provided a *vital communication* link between clients and professional staff. Senior Companions served as client advocates, notified staff of changes in client behavior, functioned as the 'eyes and ears' of the agency staff, and communicated with family members on behalf of the agency.

Although the Forum did not focus on the impact of AmeriCorps on the members themselves, Stroud reported that there is a body of research that documents that AmeriCorps:

- Improves members' life skills (such as communication, interpersonal, problem-solving, understanding organizations, and using information technology). Members whose skills were the lowest upon entering the program gained the most.
- Increases members' levels of civic engagement — strengthening their commitment to focus on community concerns and be part of a civil society that deals with social issues.
- Increases the educational attainment of members.

¹ Please see "National and Community Service: 10 Years of National Service", by Judy Karasik, for more information and references.

Finally, it is worth noting that the studies addressing quality of service describe programs that have *strong systems for training and supervising national service participants*, which add to the cost per participant. Rigorous research-based practices and assessment systems that contribute to program improvement are not possible to incorporate without training and quality control throughout the term of service.

In addition, studies indicate that *resource limitations and uncertainties regarding AmeriCorps funding have stressed programs' ability to hire and retain quality staff and acquire the funding they need to sustain the program*. Although the day-to-day control of national service programs takes place at the local level, *federal resources and priorities have a significant impact on the quality of service delivered*.

- Third, national service, particularly AmeriCorps, encourages and enables community organizations to *collaborate at the local level*. A study by Aguirre International, looking at a wide cross-section of AmeriCorps programs, found two out of three institutions involved with AmeriCorps members felt that the program fostered active community collaboration between their agency and other institutions, and three out of four thought that AmeriCorps was doing a good job helping community organizations work together. Nearly 70% felt that AmeriCorps had done a very good job at changing the ways in which organizations worked together to provide direct services.

For example, a homeless coalition used its AmeriCorps members to help form collaborative partnerships with more than forty other organizations. As a result, it raised awareness of homelessness issues among other service area providers, connected homeless clients to other social service or community-wide agencies, and, incidentally, motivated providers to streamline existing program management systems. Studies suggest that AmeriCorps has been



Stephen Goldsmith, chair, Corporation for National Service and special advisor to the President on Faith-based and Nonprofit Initiatives

similarly successful at strengthening links between schools, community organizations, and businesses, organizing referral networks, bringing together organizations that did not usually work together, and improving services by eliminating inter-agency bottlenecks.

- Finally, national service encourages *young people to enter careers in fields experiencing shortages*. Teach for America, which recruits college graduates into hard-to-fill teaching positions, is the most prominent AmeriCorps grantee identified with attracting talented young people to serve in shortage professions.

However, participants from many other national service programs find that their service experience has a significant impact on their interest in working in underserved fields.

The opportunity to explore future job and educational interests is the second most common reason given for joining AmeriCorps, and as a result of their experience, many members' career plans become more community-oriented. Learn and Serve Higher Education initiatives build the knowledge and skills of the students who serve in the community. Even elementary and secondary students may be influenced by their service experiences to think about or learn more about a future career or job.

National Service as a Strategy

Stephen Goldsmith reflected on the role of national service in delivering social services. He discussed his experience as mayor of Indianapolis trying to find the correct balance between the extremes of minimal government participation and complete reliance on government bureaucracy for the delivery of services. Solutions that involve government resources and decentralized neighborhood based delivery systems help strike the right balance.

These collaborations enhance the ability of the

nonprofit sector to engage ordinary citizens as volunteers and to simplify the coordination of services at the community level, which in turn makes these services more responsive to families. For example, families on public assistance may have a range of barriers to self-sufficiency — childcare, transportation, job training, domestic violence, drug problems, or disability. Goldsmith argued that a control-and-command, rule-driven bureaucracy cannot respond to the different needs of families as effectively as neighborhood-based organizations that can offer a range of assistance. Goldsmith called on policymakers to support non-partisan community and national service participation in these community solutions as yet another important way to help people whom prosperity has left behind.



Carol Kuhre, executive director,
Rural Action

The AmeriCorps*VISTA team works with communities of place (village, county, watershed) or with communities of interest — such as farmers or entrepreneurs working on a cluster strategy for economic development. They are trained in the principles and techniques of “Asset-based Community Development” to listen, support, link, and network citizens who want to improve their communities, economies, or the environment.

This strategy has yielded results. For instance, for the first time in 60 years, the community has returned fish to some of the tributaries of the Monday Creek Watershed. 70 woodlot owners have joined the Roots of Appalachia Growers Association, a mutual self-help association that discourages owners from cutting their forest for a large, “one time in 50 years” income infusion at the expense of profitable, environmentally preferable alternatives. Struggling farmers have come together for ‘economies of scale,’ to sell their produce to institutions such as restaurants, schools, and universities.

Rural Action AmeriCorps*VISTAs have also worked with 12 communities to gather oral histories, create murals, dramatize them and now market the murals as a Mural Corridor for purposes of low-impact heritage tourism. AmeriCorps*VISTAs have also worked with local musicians to

create a CD of unique Appalachian Ohio music, to create a tool-box for communities wanting to know what it takes to develop a mural, to produce an award-winning video on teen depression and the arts, and to establish a youth poetry project that published a youth poetry manual.

Finally, Rural Action believes that working with youth is crucial for creating a healthy Appalachian Ohio. The program works with over 4,000 young people in an

National Service and Three Critical Issues

Five program directors provided illustrations of ways in which national service addresses key issues in their communities.

Rural Development

Carol Kuhre described the way that AmeriCorps*VISTAs have helped to build the capacity of her group, a membership-based organization of 500 citizens.

Twenty-six AmeriCorps*VISTAs work out of storefront offices in six locations throughout the Appalachian counties of Ohio where the level of poverty is 28% and unemployment can be as high as 19%. AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteers serve as field organizers — locally recruited individuals who provide a grass-roots perspective — and externally recruited technical specialists including hydrogeologists, cultural geographers, and media specialists are retained in a collaborative effort.

Rural Action AmeriCorps*VISTAs follow four steps:

1. Locate people with vision at the grassroots level
2. Build community empowerment, including skills and confidence for social improvement
3. Encourage cooperation, collaboration and networking
4. Stimulate capacity building and long-term sufficiency."

Environmental Learning Program that operates both in-school and after-school programs; another program that blends service-learning and philanthropy through the creation of youth-grantmaking boards in underserved schools; and still other efforts focus on the school funding and facilities problems in Ohio.

Kuhre believes that even more lasting than any of the above outcomes is the development of civil society. While single issue groups have won some victories, their victories may be short-lived and organizations disappear quickly once their issue is resolved. In contrast are organizations that create what has been called “free social space” in which people can learn democratic values, obtain alternative sources of information, and act on their values and beliefs. Volunteers want to make a difference but often view their contributions in an individualistic manner. National service volunteers placed within Rural Action come to understand that social reconstruction is an effort between private and public spheres and requires collective effort, not just the acts of heroic individuals.

Rachel Tompkins shared **Kuhre’s** enthusiasm for national service as a strategy for promoting rural development. She cautioned that rural development is “not everything good and useful that people do in Rural America,” but rather, “building local wealth” by strengthening leadership and increasing capital assets through entrepreneurial activity. This leads to the creation of new community infrastructure — new organizations or new collaborations of organizations that enable communities to provide services that previously were not available, such as early education, job training, health care, and recreation.

A good example of national service working in rural development can be found in Lubec, Maine, which experienced a dying ocean fishing industry. High school science students and teachers created an aquaculture research lab to study a potential new fishing industry for the community that would establish

small businesses for people who once ran fishing boats. The students created business plans, conducted research on the care and feeding of species, started up demonstration enterprises, and explained their work to the community. With support from Learn and Serve America, students made a video on the history and importance of the marina, which helped them obtain funds to repair storm damage.

Not only did the students’ service help to build the local economy, it also required them to apply high levels of academic skills, engage in group planning and decision making, and present their ideas and conclusions to public audiences. Tompkins reported that

underachieving and unmotivated students became engaged and every student had a chance to work with adults that were neither teachers nor parents — all in a common enterprise of importance to the community.

Tompkins believes that schools, teachers, and young people are intellectual resources for persistently poor rural communities. Engaging students in real work on community problems makes it possible to help them meet high academic standards and learn about being contributing citizens. This strategy may help reduce ‘brain drain’ from rural places as young people see

promise and possibility in their hometown. The Rural School and Community Trust calls this ‘place-based learning.’ The service-learning community calls it ‘Community Development Oriented Service Learning.’ “Whatever you call it,” concluded Tompkins, “it is good for both students and rural communities and leads to measurable outcomes of rural development.”

Youth Development

Sister Katherine Corr discussed her faith-based organization’s partnership with AmeriCorps. Committed to developing youth through education, her program deploys AmeriCorps members to tutor children in reading and math and offer after-school and summer enrichment programs. Last year, through the



Judy Karasik, author of *Ten Years of National Service* forum paper, looks on

service of 248 full-time AmeriCorps members, more than 10,000 children in inner city schools and low-income neighborhoods benefited. Based on standardized test scores and school report cards, 80 of the children served improved their skills by at least one — and often two — grade levels.

In some cases, members have been social entrepreneurs on behalf of the children they serve. For example, at an elementary school in Baltimore, two Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Program

AmeriCorps members took note that children had nowhere to play outside. These members turned a trash-filled courtyard into a colorful playground with hopscotch courts, four-square areas, and a large circle for group games. They also started girls' and boys' basketball teams for seventh and eighth graders.

A few years ago, a Notre Dame AmeriCorps member,



Sister Katherine 'Sissy' Corr, executive director, Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Program; **Rachel Tompkins**, president, The Rural School and Community Trust

Sasha Lotus, showed extraordinary commitment and courage when she started a program for teenage drop-outs in the Edgewood public housing project in Washington, DC. Contending with the teens' very real issues, like drug abuse and drug dealing, she was nevertheless successful in helping many obtain their GEDs. The program is still going strong and is being replicated in Virginia. The Edgewood program is in partnership with the Community Development Corporation and Sasha is now on staff as the Career

Enhancement and Skills Coordinator. This illustrates that members' service with Notre Dame Mission Volunteers has an effect on the choices they make after their formal period of national service is completed. Last year, 91% of members stated in an end of the year survey that they were very likely to continue to volunteer in the community after AmeriCorps. Nearly half said they intended to enter the teaching profession.

"The great stories we have accumulated over the years to illustrate the difference Notre Dame AmeriCorps has made in the lives of students and members would fill several volumes. One of my favorite stories is about Toresa Jenkins, a member from Cincinnati. Toresa was forced to drop out of college for financial reasons. Providentially, she met a sister of Notre Dame who invited her to become a full-time Notre Dame AmeriCorps volunteer. Unsure of her future direction, Toresa accepted this challenge. She went on to serve two years at St. Francis School, where she tutored children in reading and writing, directed the after-school program, and launched a successful summer program. It became clear that Toresa was a 'natural' as a teacher. Her students thought she was one in a million!"

"For Toresa, a neon sign lit up saying, 'Teaching is for me!' With the help of the education award through AmeriCorps, Toresa returned to college and graduated from Xavier University. She is now pursuing a successful teaching career in a public school in Cincinnati. Toresa's life has been changed just as she is changing the lives of all those she teaches."

— Sister Katherine Corr

Vincent Pan offered another program example marrying service and youth development. His organization involves local college students in providing children and youth from low-income neighborhoods with the academic skills and learning opportunities they need to succeed. At the same time, the program promotes the undergraduates' development as leaders motivated to effect social change.

Through Heads Up AmeriCorps, 250 college students provide daily after-school tutoring and summer learning programs for 640 students K-6th graders in eight high-poverty DC neighborhoods and schools. 80% of the students served are African-American and 18% are Latino. For three hours each school day afternoon and all day during the summer, Heads Up children are safe, working on reading and math, and developing relationships with caring adults. Frequently, Heads Up is only child-care option for parents.

Pan points to three unique aspects of his program. First, the commitment and intensity of effort by the college students makes a difference. The program encourages this commitment by providing AmeriCorps education awards to some members, providing housing near the neighborhood locations during the summer, offering a three-week training program for the summer program, and requiring a substantial time commitment: two full days each week during the school year and at least 40 hours per week during the summer.

Second, the students who serve are diverse: two-thirds are students of color, which is rare in socially



L to R: Vincent Pan, executive director, Heads Up; Andrea Turner, director, Senior Companion Program for the City of Oakland, California

segregated campuses. Most receive financial assistance while in school. No single academic major or concentration dominates.

Third, the program employs service-learning to encourage the undergraduates' development as civic and social change leaders. Seminars and trainings promote critical thinking about urban poverty and introduce fields of education and youth development. As a result, half of the students involved say they are

more inclined to become teachers or to pursue careers in public service.

Independent Living

Andrea Turner described the significant impact these older national service participants have in her community. Senior Companions are assigned to a small number of frail elderly, helping them to remain in their own homes. They also provide support to family members.

Because of the frequency of visits and length of time the Senior Companions are able to spend with each of their clients, they are able to serve as 'eyes and ears' for professional staff, alerting the staff to changes in the client's health or well-being that require attention. They take clients to appointments, and relieve family members caring for older loved ones so that family members can take care of other needs. However, according to Turner, perhaps the most important thing Senior Companions do is provide the caring companionship that frail older Americans need but so often lack.

Youth Development AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Irv Katz called on the youth development field to “dig deeper” and explore both the “challenges to youth development writ large” and the opportunities for community and national service to help meet them. He observed that a significant number of national service volunteers are involved in youth serving agencies; as a result, a lot of knowledge has been accumulated that could be exploited. He also noted that the group participating in the forum included a great diversity of organizations, from some that were many decades old to those that were only recently established.

Michael Tierney described the work of his program in isolated and otherwise disenfranchised rural communities, where some children face a two-hour bus ride to go to school. His community center is the only public building for a half hour drive in any

direction, in an area with no other recreational opportunities. Due to isolation and lack of services, as many as 80% of area children suffer from behavioral health challenges. Tierney stressed that “you cannot have youth development if you are categorical in your funding or age restrictive.”

The core premise of Tierney’s after-school, summer, and weekend program, which focuses on elementary school students, is to teach children how to dream while providing a range of support to help them succeed. The program has benefited from partnerships with Save the Children and the Corporation for National Service, which has supported AmeriCorps*VISTAs, Promise Fellows, and other AmeriCorps members. Many national service participants are parents of children in the program. These parents start as



Standing: **Irv Katz**, president and CEO, the National Collaboration for Youth
Seated (L to R): **Ira Harkavy**, associate vice president and director, Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania; **Joanna Lennon**, executive director, East Bay Conservation Corps in Oakland, California; **Michael Tierney**, executive director, Step by Step, Big Ugly, West Virginia

volunteers; the most committed become two-year AmeriCorps members, and a few go on to become AmeriCorps*VISTAs, where they round out their job skills with experience in program management and fundraising. Some go on to full-time jobs with non-profit organizations, while others, because of their negative experiences with education, need a higher level of support to make use of their education awards and to continue on to full-time employment.

Joanna Lennon has used national service to enable her organization to develop models that can be replicated nationally. Her program involves about 200 at-risk young adults, who are mainly people of color. These young corps members are AmeriCorps members. They run a recycling program and perform other types of service while they work toward a high school diploma or GED certificate.

Lennon's program also operates Project YES (Youth Engaged in Service), which pairs college graduates with classroom teachers to bring service-learning to schools across the country. Through extensive national partnerships with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and schools, East Bay Conservation Corps also operates a charter school with the goal of becoming a template for public education. AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and Senior Corps members all serve at the charter school. Lennon ended her remarks with the observation that service should be integral to how we educate children. "If we don't start looking at our young people as a resource that has something to offer, we are in big trouble...in this country," she concluded.

East Bay Conservation Corps

The EBCC is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to promoting youth development through community service and environmental awareness. Their various programs are designed for youth of all ages, and include the CorpsMember Program, Project YES (Youth Engaged in Service), the AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative, the Institute for Citizenship Education and Teacher Preparation and the Elementary Level of the EBCC Charter School (serving grades K-5).

Please see www.ebcc-school.org for more information.

Ira Harkavy issued a challenge: "How do we educate students to be creative, contributing democratic citizens in life in a genuine collaborative way?" The University Assisted Community Schools, works with 10,000 children and family members in Philadelphia, providing an extended day program, a Saturday program, and community service connected to core subjects.

Harkavy observed that "human beings learn best when they focus on real problems." The university's first national service program was part of the Corporation for National Service's 'Summer of Service' that preceded AmeriCorps. The program focused on children's health by immunizing the population of west Philadelphia. Additional support from the Corporation helped the University develop a summer service corps for university students to help area schools expand community connections. Through another program, AmeriCorps*VISTA members joined senior citizens and members

of local congregations to run digital divide projects with schools and churches throughout western Philadelphia, placing over 500 computers in 13 community-based computer labs in the last two years. Most recently, the university has received a Learn and Serve America grant to fund a network of higher education institutions in Philadelphia that engage local communities in developing University-Assisted Community Schools projects in 20 sites across Philadelphia. This program is now expanding to an additional 50 higher education institutions across the country.

"How do we educate students to be creative, contributing democratic citizens in life in a genuine collaborative way?"

— Ira Harkavy

Harkavy concluded by describing the university's national strategy of change — working to create democratic schools. “Teach the teachers and educate the educators,” he noted, “so that teaching and learning occurs by focusing on common, real-world problems in the local communities.”

Eric Schwarz presented his perspective on the challenges and opportunities for service and youth development. Schwarz founded Citizen Schools seven years ago to provide an after-school program that would educate children and strengthen communities. It was targeted at middle school kids, a group that often considers after-school programs to be “for little kids, so they flee.” In fact, only 10% of the youth in organized after-school programs are middle school students or older.

Apprenticeship opportunities form the core of Citizen Schools. These are led by 2000 citizen volunteers — lawyers, business people, architects, chefs, grandmothers — anyone with a skill or trade who is willing to commit to 10 two-hour sessions over ten weeks “to do something amazing with a team of 7 or 8 middle-school kids.” Lawyers work with them to develop a mock trial; architects help them to redesign public spaces; chefs teach them to create gourmet meals for families. The program was even able to find a way for a funeral home operator to participate by involving the youth in developing a set of activities and games to help children deal with grief. Later, the funeral home operator invited Citizen Schools to an international conference in Canada to promote the curriculum. With this rich mix of opportunities, the youth are “sticking with it, they stay,” according to Schwarz, “which is rare for middle-school kids.”

In addition to apprenticeships, the program includes homework support and explorations around the city, including college campuses, as well programming to build writing skills and data analysis skills.

According to Schwarz, while initially the program was led by “typical after-school program staff, which is to say part-time, low wages, no benefits, and high

turnover,” today the program is staffed by teaching fellows in a program designed to turn part-time jobs into full-time jobs by marrying the position with a second part-time job. Through this new model, 35 people have been hired full-time — many of them supported by AmeriCorps. In addition to serving in the after-school program, these teaching fellows work in the morning at a museum or school. As a result, they enter a full-time career track with benefits. The program plans to add a Masters Degree component for the teaching fellows through a partnership with Lesley University.

Schwarz discussed four basic trends addressed by his program: the migration of moms to the workforce; the difficulty of entering onto

“the middle-class track as a worker;” the decline in the social capital; and the narrowing of the purpose of school. He concluded by calling on national service and the after-school field to respond to three specific challenges:

- (1) Transforming the transient low-paid workforce in the after-school field by creating a national professional corps, funded by AmeriCorps.
- (2) Engaging neighborhood-based volunteers to work with youth, and specifically, to introduce them to possible careers.
- (3) Eliminating funding “silos” by providing leadership funds to help build successful models that link after-school programs more powerfully to learning.

Irv Katz appealed to the youth development and service fields to “find a way to be bold about our work.”

Recognizing Challenges: Youth Development and National Service²

- *Fill the ‘Skills Gap’* so that service members graduating from AmeriCorps, but not yet employable, could receive help enabling them to further their

² These challenges and the following strategies were identified by participants in the youth development discussion.



Eric Schwarz, executive director,
Citizen Schools

education using the AmeriCorps education award, such as receiving academic credit for their service experience.

- *Make service a key to learning* at every level of schooling and higher education, as well as for the five million ‘dropouts’ in America.
- *Change the role of public schools* to become a tool to promote democratic participation, to provide a broader range of services to meet all the needs of a child, not just educational needs, and to create a continuum from pre-kindergarten through higher education.
- *End the chasm between the educators/in-school and out-of-school/youth-development worlds.*
- *Create better tools to measure how students develop* emotionally and socially, not just academically, and promote a better understanding of the positive outcomes in these areas.
- *Include the voice of youth in policy making.*
- *Engage parents* in education to end distrust between parents and schools.
- *Encourage the perception of youth as service participants rather than recipients.*
- *Develop and retain youth workers*, reversing the shortage of qualified youth workers due to lack of training, resources, and career ladders.
- *Build on the strength of diversity*, which allows for a positive interaction between those who come from the communities served and those with higher education levels from outside the community.
- *Create advocates for sustainable funding for youth programs.*
- *Provide meaningful out-of-school time programs* that include educational enrichment and service-learning, and track outcomes of these enriched programs.



Shirley Sagawa, principal of sagawa/jospin and co-organizer of the forum

Shirley Sagawa recapped the challenges, grouping them into five categories.

- (1) *Service as a form of workforce development* — filling the skill gaps of people leaving AmeriCorps and building pathways to transition national service alumni into the youth development field.
- (2) *Service as a strategy for holistic approaches to youth development*, including strengthening relationships between youth programs and schools, getting parents involved, and educating youth not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well.
- (3) *Building better public understanding* (as well as funder and policymaker appreciation) *of the role of service in youth development.*
- (4) *Strengthening the continuum of service programs* from the youngest age to college, as well as for youth who do not go on to college.
- (5) *Strengthening service programs as a means to encourage citizenship and social change.*

Identifying Strategies: Youth Development and National Service

1) Service as workforce development

National service offers participants an intensive, experiential opportunity to learn about careers in the youth development field. These individuals have already shown their interest and commitment to helping others, and will have a realistic picture of youth work. More effort should be made to help these individuals stay on the path to careers in youth development. Suggested strategies include:

- Creating a national professional corps focused on out-of-school time, possibly modeled on the program Eric Schwarz described.

- Combining the training of teachers, social workers and youth development workers within a community.
- Encouraging the Corporation for National and Community Service to work with the Youth Worker Apprenticeship program at the Department of Labor.
- Weaving together existing national efforts on career ladder, training, vocational education, and other workforce development programs.
- Promoting careers in national service that go beyond two years.

2) Service as a strategy for holistic approaches to youth development

At every level, programs for youth are fragmented, focusing on just one facet of development. Schools do not work with after-school programs; parents are not involved in schools; career development is not integrated into other youth programs. Schools often take a narrow view of their role, focusing only on academic achievement and neglecting social and emotional development. More efforts should be made to promote the holistic development of youth. Suggested strategies include:

- Broadening the goal of education to include building a democratic society, and using service-learning as a way to achieve this goal.
- Providing a link between in-school and out-of-school time by cycling staff through both.
- Engaging citizen volunteers in schools and in out-of-school time programs.
- Developing new metrics for success.
- Using AmeriCorps as a vehicle to bridge the silos of federal funding.
- Developing and disseminating quality curriculum, activities, materials, and supplies for after-school programs.

3) Building better public understanding of service as a strategy for youth development

Limited appreciation for service as a strategy for youth development translates into weak support for

national service among policymakers, funders, and leaders in the youth development field. It results in the underutilization of an effective strategy to serve youth, and a lack of opportunities for youth to serve. Suggested strategies include:

- Working with nontraditional partners such as museums and businesses.
- Engaging national service alumni as advocates.
- Providing support for an organization of AmeriCorps members and alumni.
- Using consistent terminology when discussing national service.
- Marketing service through career offices in high schools and colleges.
- Collecting stories that illustrate the power of national service for youth development.

4) Strengthening the continuum of service programs and educational options for children from the youngest age to college or alternative programs for out-of-school youth.

Service-learning has proven to be an effective strategy to motivate students to achieve academically, including those students who struggle with traditional approaches to teaching. Suggested strategies include:

- Encouraging ‘cross-age’ service-learning where older students (including those who have not excelled academically) tutor younger students.
- Enabling public education dollars to ‘follow the child’ to alternative schools and youth corps.

5) Strengthening service programs to promote citizenship and social change.

Research demonstrates that service does lead to more volunteering and ‘hands-on’ civic action. But there is less evidence that service experiences lead to political activism or advocacy for specific issues or change. Service programs that have had success in encouraging political or policy-oriented forms of civic action include program elements specifically directed at this goal. To

make this practice more widespread, suggested strategies include:

- Encouraging program leaders to model participatory behavior by acting as advocates themselves.
- Incorporating social change curricula into out-of-school time and service programs.
- Requiring service-learning as a part of the educational process and making the requirement meaningful by tying it to important goals such as acquiring a driver's license or graduating from high school.
- Providing information that will help service programs strengthen their reflection components so that "making a larger difference" is explored.
- Advocating for the Corporation for National and Community Service to strengthen the national identity of AmeriCorps through training, joint service days, and other means.
- Researching, identifying and disseminating effective practices to teach youth and other service participants citizen participation skills.



Cal George, special projects director, National Association of Community Health Centers, and **Marty Friedman**, executive director, Education Works, contribute to the discussion

service to get things done.” There are many examples of AmeriCorps members helping to create that infrastructure. The programs provide them with job skills and career opportunities where none previously existed.

In addition, service helps those working in the field to take a “holistic approach to youth development” and to “support a continuum of experiences from kindergarten through high school.” She also noted that “service is a tool for citizenship development” that helps to change the way young people think about themselves and their communities.

Not many people recognize the potential of service to achieve these goals. “It is a serious challenge for us to become marketers and advocates. We have to have a language that is understood by people outside our circle,” according to Milton. She also shared the idea that the Corporation for National Service could help programs “break out of the silos that exist in the federal government” by connecting programs with other sources of government support that would assist their programs to achieve their goals.

Finally, she called for “people in AmeriCorps not to feel isolated but to be aware that they do belong to something bigger than themselves.” Toward this end, she endorsed the idea of creating a “culture of service” in the United States by (1) incorporating service-learning into all school curricula beginning with kindergarten, possibly as a requirement, and (2) creating measures for youth development and citizenship that become as widespread as academic benchmarks.

Follow-up and Reflection on the Youth Group Discussion

Regarding *service as workforce development*, **Catherine Milton** noted that “in those communities where there is a constant poverty, you need an infrastructure of

“It is a serious challenge for us to become marketers and advocates. We have to have a language that is understood by people outside our circle.”

— **Catherine Milton**, executive director, Friends of the Children

Rural Development

AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Sandra Rosenblith questioned the means by which national service can become a more effective strategy for rural development, and asked other practitioners in the field to share their experiences as a way of identifying the problems and challenges inherent in the current system.

Carol Buster described the work of her program. Located in Hugo, Oklahoma, in the southeastern part of the state, the Little Dixie AmeriCorps program offers job training for local residents, while simultaneously providing the local area with a boost in tourism infrastructure. Projects in which Little Dixie AmeriCorps members are engaged include a self-help housing program; landscaping and cabin construction at Hugo Lake; and landscaping, remodeling, and building projects at Beaver's Bend State Park. The key goal of the program is to provide AmeriCorps members with the education and skills training they need to stay and work in their community. The key challenge is finding sufficient funding in a state that is facing large budget deficits and budget cuts.

Mavis Hill discussed the evolution of her community's youth corps program. Tyrell County is a sparsely populated, rural county in the eastern part of North Carolina. Traditional economic development in the county has been difficult for many reasons, including the fact that most of the area is made up of protected wetlands. In the early 1990s, the high school dropout rate was high, and for those young people who did graduate from high school, few had money for college. For the most part, the young people moved away from the county as soon as they could.

During that time, the Tyrell County CDC decided to focus its energies not on traditional CDC activities like



Sandra Rosenblith, senior vice president, Rural LISC

housing, but on the development of human capital. In 1993 it sponsored a small summer youth corps pilot program. In 1994, an AmeriCorps grant allowed the program to double the size of its corps and the scope of its activities. As with the Little Dixie program, members focused on completing environmental projects and building the tourism infrastructure of the community. For example, they built boardwalks and nature trails, helping to create a beautiful and environmentally sensitive tourist attraction. The program

provided its members with job training, team building, and leadership skills so that they could stay in their communities, understand local issues, and become leadership 'assets' for the community. For many youth corps members, the AmeriCorps stipend was the only non-public income for their families. After its initial three-year grant, the Tyrell County youth corps program was denied additional AmeriCorps support. According to Hill, the AmeriCorps model is better designed for programming in urban areas than in rural areas; more administrative and programming flexibility is needed for rural programs.

Jerry Brant described the Pennsylvania region in which his program operates. Entirely rural, the region depended for many years on the mining and steel industries, but slowly the mines and factories closed. Today, the median income for a family of four in this community is \$28,000. NORCAM is a rural CDC that focuses on providing job training and placement for low-income earners and former welfare recipients. It provides affordable housing for first-time homebuyers, low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. NORCAM has an affiliate, Community Financial Resources, which provides micro-credit, small business

loans, and mortgages to local residents.

NORCAM has also been the driving force in the region's efforts to construct a regional trail network using abandoned railroad lines as multi-purpose recreational trails. NORCAM has been able to expand its services and programming, in large measure, because of the support it receives from AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA. The major challenge for this program is the difficulty in recruiting people to

serve. The lack of certainty about funding for AmeriCorps has chilled recruitment from within the community. The reality of serving in a truly rural community makes recruitment and retention of members from outside of the community almost impossible.

Allan T. Comp introduced the group to the environmental and social problems caused by acid mine drainage (AMD). It is a "ubiquitous and constant" problem that plagues many states, including much of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. His program model is termed "artful engagement in environmental improvement," which also provides a window into greater community issues. While he has raised over \$1 million from a variety of funders, there are no paid program staff; his only human support comes from AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps*VISTA members, or other interns. For him, the big challenge for service programs is "How do you support success?" Programs need to feel the sense of security that accompanies institutional support. Grant prohibitions on fund-raising are harmful.

Dee Davis perceived that the real challenges facing rural development were connected to telling (or not telling) the stories about service. Very few people know about all of the great accomplishments by rural programs and how successful they are, especially when



T. Allan Comp, Ph.D., founder, AMD & ART;
Jerry Brant, president, The NORCAM Group

considering the challenges they face. He suggested that commissioning external evaluations of programs, something that could then be used by an outside advocacy group, would help spread the good news about the work of rural organizations. Rural community leaders tended to agree with him, and came to a consensus that staff at the Corporation for National Service do not fully appreciate the challenges faced by rural communities in operating

service programs. Leaders of rural communities acknowledged that they have not clearly articulated what national service is doing, and should be doing, to benefit rural areas.

Recognizing Challenges: Rural Development and National Service³

- **Recruitment.** In today's political climate, with the future of AmeriCorps so uncertain, it is difficult to recruit members from the local rural community. The unique nature of rural communities also makes it difficult to recruit and then retain members from outside the community.
- **Costs per member.** It is generally more expensive to operate service programs in rural areas than in urban or suburban areas, due to differences in scale and transportation-related costs. The cost-per-member restrictions may make it prohibitive for rural organizations to operate AmeriCorps programs in the future.
- **Limited terms of service.** Rural problems tend to be long-term, and AmeriCorps members can serve, at

³ These challenges and the following strategies were identified by participants in the rural development discussion.

maximum, only two years. For some programs, it seems that as soon as the AmeriCorps member is trained and truly invested in the success of a project, it is already time for him or her to leave. Most program directors would prefer a longer, perhaps five-year, term of service for AmeriCorps members.

- **Differences between AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA.**

There continues to be a strong feeling of inequity between AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps*-VISTA members, and

confusion surrounding the roles of each. It is difficult to keep track of those members who can fundraise, those who can hold part-time jobs, and other stipulations that are specific to each program.

- **Sustainability.** A key question is how programs can continue to raise the required matching funds in rural areas where very little industry or economic development exists, and in states with significant budget shortfalls and budget cuts.
- **Prohibitions against lobbying.** Rules prohibiting the use of federal grant dollars to lobby Congress have made program directors wary of any type of political engagement, including the education of policy makers regarding the value of their programs. As a result, the success of their programs is largely an untold story for the people who could help the most with advocacy for their programs.
- **Focus on volunteer generation.** For the past few years, AmeriCorps programs have been encouraged to make volunteer generation part of their program model. This year, volunteer generation became a required activity of the grant. For many rural programs, volunteer generation is a lofty but very



L to R: Mavis Hill, executive director, Tyrell County Community Development Corporation; Carol Buster, AmeriCorps program director, Little Dixie Community Action Agency; and Deb Jospin, principal, Sagawa/Jospin

difficult goal to achieve.

- **Evaluation.** Program staff are faced with too many overlapping, redundant, and inconsistent performance measures. In the past, information from evaluations were passed on from the local programs to the national level, but no information or feedback ever made its way back to the community. Program directors want to be more engaged in designing relevant evaluation standards, to insure that “more than numbers” are measured and evaluated. As stated

earlier, rural development is a long-term process and AmeriCorps members are short-term resources. Is it more appropriate to measure the program’s long-term progress or, alternatively, what the AmeriCorps members accomplished during their individual terms of service? Many believe that AmeriCorps has been ‘shackled’ by a well-meaning focus on short-term results.

Identifying Strategies: Service as Opportunity in Rural Communities

- **Targeted development goals.** Historically, AmeriCorps*VISTA members have been very successful in helping to build community wealth. In the future, AmeriCorps*VISTA grants could be targeted to specific development ends, including the development of human capital, building community infrastructure (i.e., helping to create after-school and digital divide programs), and the creation of wealth through micro-enterprise development activities.
- **Teacher support.** National service members should be used to support teachers in rural communities, where resources are extremely stretched.

- *Leadership development* is a critical component of successful rural development. By design, service programs support the development of new leaders by engaging young people as “problem solvers, not problems,” and providing them with the tools they need to make a difference in their communities. In some cases, young people have led the way in reinventing entire communities. When they start seeing the difference they can make, they find reasons to stay and participate in their communities. Service programs should become a more significant partner in training the next generation of rural leadership. Possibilities include the creation of a Rural Leadership Academy that would focus on the specific needs of rural communities.
- *Human capital development.* Similar to leadership development is the more general development of human capital. Service programs already play a role here, by providing people with needed skills training and with help to continue their education. Service also provides opportunities for positive youth development, helping to counteract the ‘brain drain’ phenomenon that plagues rural areas. Again, people who have served in their communities are more likely to stay and participate in their communities.
- *Service-based community rebuilding* is a critical component in the survival of rural communities when the private sector market fails, when traditional jobs move away or never existed in the first place. Tyrell County’s youth corps program is a perfect example of this non-traditional path to successful,



Amy Glasmeier, professor of geography and regional planning at Pennsylvania State

environmentally sensitive economic development.

- *Service programs targeted at older Americans* can “capture the energy” of the Baby Boomers, many of whom have decided to retire to rural America. Rather than becoming part of the problem, these retirees can become part of the solution.
- *Creation of incentives.* For both the aging Baby Boomers and other non-traditional service participants, there is support for alternative education awards, including education awards that could be transferred among family members or awards in the form of IDAs or health insurance vouchers.

- *Increasing the number of opportunities for discussion.* Increased communication among experts in the field would allow for the articulation of a coherent theory of change, solutions regarding how best to engage the corporate and small business communities in public/private partnerships, and the creation of an aggressive public engagement campaign.

Follow-up and Reflection on the Rural Group Discussion

Amy Glasmeier spoke about the unique set of challenges that service programs in rural communities face. For example, they tend to be located in remote areas with limited public infrastructure, in organizations with limited internal capacity, and in communities with few organizations involved in complementary service provision — all of which contribute to making rural programs more expensive and less efficient to operate than urban programs.

“We are fighting for recognition, we need to raise public awareness about the wonderful work that is being done in rural communities.”

— Amy Glasmeier

Goals for service programs in rural communities include:

- Create internal capacity, both at the community level and at the organizational level.
- Help people learn how to organize and become effective participants in planning their future.
- Build coalitions and leverage other resources to get things done.
- Build civic capacity and social capital within the community.

Within the world of national service, there are different models of programs, each with its own set of limitations and opportunities. Rural problems challenge each of these models. For service to work as a strategy in rural communities, more flexibility needs to be given to the

programs, allowing them to adapt to the needs of the communities and respond to the problems they are trying to solve.

On the other hand, Glasmeier noted that despite structural challenges, service programs have accomplished a great deal in rural communities. There are countless success stories that go untold; “We are fighting for recognition, we need to raise public awareness about the wonderful work that is being done in rural communities.” Glasmeier noted that the private sector, specifically the larger corporations, need to be engaged “beyond their corporate boundaries” in supporting this work, and that foundations need to think about different ways to engage “the movement” by funding projects that are “new, creative, innovative, and unique.”



Tess Scannell, director, National Senior Corps and **Samuel Halperin**, senior fellow, American Youth Policy Forum

Independent Living for Seniors

AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Tom Endres began by discussing long-term care (LTC) in the context of independent living for seniors. Describing the need for long-term care as an “emerging national crisis,” Endres stated that all Americans are “at risk” of needing long-term and personal care services. This is due, in large part, to the changing demographics of age in this country and to the fact that more people suffer from chronic illness for longer periods of time.

In addition, LTC services are also increasing in the under-65 age populations due to escalating childhood illnesses. Few people are prepared for the financial risk and personal demands involved in providing LTC to family members. First, long-term care insurance is not part of our culture, and its cost is prohibitively high. Second, the backbone of long-term care is family and friends; they provide 80% of such services. As a result, society does not consider care giving to be a real job. The reality is exhausting and thankless work that puts a tremendous strain on families. Moreover, families are now geographically dispersed and adult children are a diminishing resource as providers of LTC services. Third, if the informal LTC system collapses, the cost of a formal system would break the bank. The actual costs in Medicare and Medicaid will skyrocket. Fourth, the long-term care system is fragmented and complex. People often do not know where to go for help.



Tom Endres, Endres and Associates;
John Pribyl, Senior Companion director,
Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota

John Pribyl noted that while there are several ways to think about this issue, “the bottom line is that nobody wants to go to a nursing home; people want to stay in their homes as long as possible.” Using the services of stipended volunteers is the most “efficient, cost effective, and humane way” to provide support to frail seniors and help them remain at home. “When one thinks about what friends do for friends, it’s basic.” He recounted the story of his great aunt

Agnes. She lived alone, and he came to see her once a week, bringing her groceries and generally keeping in touch. He was, in a sense, her ‘junior companion.’ When he could not make his weekly visit, however, she would become upset. She would feel sorry for herself, making herself feel worse until she had to go and see her doctor. But in truth, she did not need to see her doctor. Her doctor simply became her ‘very expensive senior companion,’ a source for social interaction, someone she had come to trust over the years. The actual Senior Companion program is a cost-efficient and effective alternative that helps seniors meet their needs for social interaction, and helps provide them with services that make their stays at home possible.

Adriane LaRoza noted that what young people can contribute to these senior issues is “staggering.” She then told the story of Laura Lockwood, a teenager serving in ManaTEEN, who started a program designed

“The opportunity to have this conversation has happened before, but not a lot has changed; this is a forum where we should take this chance to make some changes happen.”

— Dwight Rasmussen

to prepare other young people to “be patient with” the seniors they visited. The young people were also trained to assess the home safety needs of the seniors, and now they are participating in an ‘Adopt a Grandparent’ program. Youth can be the catalyst for getting families more involved in the independent living issue. ManaTEEN uses all of the national service resources available, including AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA, which allows everyone to contribute “what he or she does best.”

Carol Crecy stated that volunteers — over 500,000 of them in programs such as Senior Companions — are the backbone of what happens at the community level. The Network of State Units on Aging and local Area Agencies on Aging rely on volunteers to assist in the planning, coordination, and delivery of services.

Tom Endres reflected on the last thirty years of national service. In the 1970s and 1980s, volunteers proved that they would “give graciously.” Systems and programs were designed and established with an emphasis on the volunteer side of the volunteer-service equation. In the 1990s, the emphasis changed and focus was placed on determining what difference volunteers make. Volunteers began to be evaluated in terms of outcomes and impacts on the community. Volunteers now stand as a credible, expanding resource to help support long-term personal care and independent living for seniors.

Questions to Consider

What’s the future for national service and independent living for seniors?

For national service to be truly relevant and responsive to the needs of seniors, it needs to attract a ‘new breed’ of volunteers. One suggestion for increasing involvement is the idea of building ‘family teams’ of volunteers. This model helps to address the sustainability issue



Adraine LaRoza, executive director, ManaTEEN and **Carol Crecy**, director, Center for Communication and Consumer Services, Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

and allows people to fill in for one another. According to **Earl Shelp**, the team is the surrogate or extended family, out of which grows a significant degree of cooperation.

“We need to make national service sexy” is a common refrain among practitioners in the service field. While some people will volunteer no matter what, a creative social marketing campaign may be needed to recruit others (the newer volunteers). Senior experts are vocal in their conviction: “Don’t underestimate the kids!”

The need to support service programs in which volunteering options vary is tantamount, thereby providing opportunities for younger and/or episodic volunteers to participate. Programs may also consider using volunteers who do not depend on stipends.

Labor unions would also be a good source of volunteers. In any case, the unions need to be involved in issues of expansion and to avoid potential conflicts in the public policy arena. Union leaders are sometimes

wary of engaging with volunteer organizations because it is often thought that the use of volunteers is a way to reduce the paid workforce.

More venues in the spirit of the forum, in which seniors and youth come together to discuss these issues, are necessary. The funding community is key — if funders begin to employ an intergenerational lens in their decisions, they will see the value of this partnership and will help bring the groups together.

Donna Rabiner highlighted the evaluation of the Senior Companions Program conducted by the Research Triangle Institute for the Corporation for National Service. Her conclusion was that the Senior Companions Program provides a viable model for service. Funding for the program should be expanded, and income eligibility requirements relaxed so that more people can serve.

Donna Rabiner, Ph.D, Health and Aging Program, Research Triangle Institute International

Tess Scannell remarked that the purpose of this conference was to “set the stage for reauthorization [of national service legislation], to make the case that national service really works to serve serious human and social needs throughout the country.” She stressed that Americans need to see facts that support the claim that “service works,” that programs can use volunteers of all ages to help ease the independent living crisis.

Where do we want to be in three to five years?

Endres remarked that as the problems of long-term care and independent living escalate, policymakers are going to have to look at low-cost or no-cost alternatives to hospital and nursing home care. National service is an alternative.

Jaia Peterson noted, “We need to get to a point where people realize that it is vital to fund national service.”

Scannell cautioned service programs not to position themselves as low-cost alternatives to purchased services provided by unionized workers. Rather, volunteer service should be offered as a product that no one else is providing. Under this scenario, unions and private sector providers will see service programs as helpful complements to what they do, not as rivals or threats and not as an excuse to displace paid workers. Service programs must be able to distinguish themselves in the marketplace.

Goals to be targeted include:

Recruiting and training enough of the right volunteers to help meet the needs posed by seniors living independently. Much of the group’s discussion revolved around whether this goal was achievable. When looking at why people volunteer, for example, flexibility is mentioned as a key incentive.

Developing the capacity of long-term service care providers to manage their programs. Volunteer networks can be used as the major complementary resource to paid



Earl Shelp, Ph.D., president, and **Ronald Sunderland,** Interfaith Care Partners in Houston

caregivers or family caregivers, freeing up health care professionals so they can use those skills in which they are specifically trained.

Steve Ristau articulated his vision of this goal as a three-legged stool, under which the following questions were asked:

- (1) Do you have interested people?
- (2) Is the program infrastructure flexible enough to deal with them?
- (3) Do the public policy and funding environments support this flexible model?

All three questions need to be answered ‘yes’ for this goal to be met.

What’s in it for the Hill?

The field needs to prove to Congress that it has programs, and that these low-cost programs can deliver a full menu of important services. The point also needs to be made that volunteer service strengthens families and thus strengthens communities. Furthermore, 60% of Medicaid dollars go to nursing homes. In trying to control Medicaid spending, the federal government needs to consider the value of senior service programs as a partner in this effort.

Recognizing Challenges: Independent Living for Seniors and National Service⁴

- *Communicating and coordinating resources in communities.* For example, many senior service providers function independently from one another. People must approach one provider for one thing, and another provider for something else. The community needs efficient and effective linkages among providers, making it easier for a family to go one place to get what they need.

⁴ These challenges and the following strategies were identified by participants in the rural development discussion.

- *Committing time.* Potential volunteers often want to do ‘one-stop-shopping’ when seeking volunteer placements. The programs must learn to accommodate volunteers who want to help but cannot make a long-term commitment such as that required of Senior Companions.
- *Engaging young people.* To do this, the national service community needs to remove ‘categorical program definitions,’ become more flexible, and promote greater integration at all levels of programming. The Corporation for National Service promotes more cross-stream programming but the question is “how effective has cross-stream programming been?”
- *Telling the story of these great programs.* Many experts in the field consider the Senior Companions Program to be the ‘best kept secret’ of national service. The challenge is to get the positive messages out, and acquire more funding for the programs as a result, but without making the demand for programs greater than the current capacity (the ‘waiting list’ problem).
- *Spending inordinate amounts of time on paperwork.*
- *Transporting clients.* If the program is in an urban area, volunteers are reluctant to fight traffic to get clients to their doctors’ appointments. If the program is in a rural area, volunteers often cannot reach their clients. Programs need more funding simply to reimburse volunteers for transporting clients.
- *Matching needs with services.* For example, seniors need assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs), including help with daily baths and dressing, but volunteers would rather provide

lighter chores such as grocery shopping.

- *Convincing the government that volunteering costs money and needs an infrastructure to be effective.* For example, funds spent to hire volunteer coordinators are a very smart investment because the coordinators leverage additional volunteers and facilitate these volunteers’ experiences. Organizations need funding to support their administrative work, but funders are often reluctant to provide for those expenses.
- *Bringing the business community into this issue area.* One idea is to have an award program for companies that support volunteer initiatives, including paid time off for employees to do volunteer work.
- *Legal liability issues* inherent in programs that bring people, often strangers, into the homes of senior citizens, or that work with vulnerable populations.
- *Maintaining standards and qualifications for volunteers.* In order to recruit consistently high quality volunteers, programs may have to offer incentives in addition to a small stipend.
- *Supporting a nonprofit organization’s desire and ability to be innovative and successful.* More training and technical assistance will help the nonprofits manage

budget cuts, fundraise and build awareness for their programs. “It’s going to require risk-taking leaders of nonprofits” to succeed in this new world.

- *Reaching out to immigrant communities.*
- *Research is needed to show that volunteers actually are successful at keeping people out of nursing homes.*



L to R: Peter Edelman, professor of law, Georgetown University; Susan Stroud; Ira Harkavy; and Catherine Milton

Identifying Strategies: Independent Living for Seniors and National Service



Independent Living Discussion Group

- *Design a public relations campaign* that highlights both the current crisis in independent living and all of the research showing that volunteerism works in this area. It may be useful to have a celebrity spokesperson. It may also help to refer to the issue as “independent and respite services” or “independent and family caregiver support” rather than ‘long-term care.’
- *Make the ‘business case’* for why this is a critical issue and how value is added through volunteer service.
- *Develop bold new partnerships* with AARP, NCOA and other national groups working to support seniors, and the faith community.
- *Build families as a vocal advocacy group.*
- *Tap youth as a resource.*
- *Encourage the Senate to conduct more hearings on ‘the graying of America.’* In addition, identify a Congressional champion to fight for these issues, someone who has experienced these caregiving issues personally.
- *Work on changes to the legislation* reauthorizing the Corporation for National Service, adding flexibility where it is needed.
- *Continue to network and create partnerships* with other service groups at the state and local level, connecting caregiver systems to volunteer resource systems.

John Gomperts, executive director,
Experience Corps

Follow-up and Reflection on the Independent Living Group Discussion

John Gomperts gave an overview of the prior discussions around national service and independent living and summarized the key points. In terms of

long-term care, the goal now is to figure out how national service can fit into that work. Long-term care is still considered a private, family problem, not a public problem. Public support needs to be ‘sold’ to people. The service community has to tell the story about how ‘service as a strategy’ can have a tremendous, beneficial

impact on social problems. Successful models need to be identified and replicated. Flexibility and consistency must be built into both service program models and delivery systems.

The key points to keep in mind during these important discussions are:

- Long-term care is an impending crisis with the potential to bankrupt families and the federal systems of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security — systems upon which most people continue to rely for economic security in later life.
- The risk of the need for long-term care is not just to the aged. Everyone is at risk and the fastest growing users of long-term care are those under 65. Increasing diagnosis of child asthma and attention deficit disorder is suddenly a new type of sandwiching in which adult children who are attempting to care for their own parents are also contending with care issues for their children.
- Service is not recognized or accepted as the tool it has become. Service participants, from youth to older adults, have become a new supply of human resources to a service sector that continues to be overwhelmed with increasing needs in an environment of diminishing resources.

The recommendations from these independent living discussions are the beginning of a blueprint to define service as a strategy to help avert a long-term care catastrophe. The service community and the informal care giving community must be brought into the discussion about the future of long-term care and how to pay for it.

The Way Forward

The power of a convening an event such as this Forum is the chance to explore new visions for the future. In the Forum, speakers and participants offered compelling — although not entirely consistent — ideas of ways that national service could transform America for the better.

Legislative Perspectives on the Future of National Service

Rep. Rosa DeLauro reflected on what she termed an ‘old-fashioned’ notion of serving one’s country, describing service as not merely a high calling, but an obligation. She recalled growing up in a household with immigrant parents, where she was “constantly reminded of the value of giving back to a country that had given so much to us. My father, who dropped out of school in the seventh grade, largely because students made fun of



Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT-3rd)

his broken English, went on to become a proud veteran of this country. He served his country and got on the city council. My mother served on the city council, too, for over 35 years. Looking back, I understand how I myself ended up in public service — and, indeed, how so many children of immigrant parents ended up serving this country over the centuries.”

DeLauro cautioned that this sense of shared responsibility “has sadly dissipated over the course of the last several years.” However, the tragedy of September 11 has inspired “a

new wave of efforts to fortify our communities and bolster enrollment in successful volunteer programs such as AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and Senior Corps.” In response to this revitalized enthusiasm, she proposed a new effort focusing on the teenage years, a time when new experiences and choices influence future decisions.

Summer of Service: A New Rite of Passage?

Several Forum speakers called for new ways for young teenagers to serve their communities, particularly during out of school time.

In proposing legislation to create a new ‘summer of service’ program for young teens, Rep. Rosa DeLauro noted that “the teenage years are a critical time in the lives of young people, a time when new experiences and choices influence the rest of their lives. How they spend that time can either put them on a course of engaged learning and active citizenship or send them spiraling down a path of risky behavior and the likelihood of failure. But there is no question that when properly organized, supervised, and trained, teenagers make invaluable contributions to their communities.”

Rep. DeLauro called for a network of service programs for middle school students to serve in their communities after school or during the summer. These programs would be staffed with current AmeriCorps members or university students — who have already proven themselves to be strong, positive role models for youth. She believes that a national AmeriCorps-staffed effort would not only prove cost effective, but also enable the programs to benefit both from the large network of community-based AmeriCorps sponsors and the core organizational capacity of the program.

Rep. DeLauro announced that she was reintroducing her bill, **Rite of Passage Service Act**, which would apply to students between the ages of 12 and 16. Like AmeriCorps, after completing 150 of hours of service, participants in a Rite of Passage Service Program would be eligible for a \$500 stipend to help pay for college. In order to link service activities to school curricula, each program would have the option to develop a service-learning curriculum linked to academic goals. Participants would also have the opportunity to attend workshops focused on leadership skills, public speaking, and conflict resolution as well as other development programs.

“I am hopeful that we can make national service a rite of passage for *every* teenager in America as they advance through school,” she concluded.

President Bush: A Call to Service

John Bridgeland found his vision for the future in America’s long-standing civic tradition — encompassing military personnel, fire fighters and police officers, Peace Corps volunteers, and citizen volunteers. He described President Bush’s efforts to expand the Peace Corps, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and other initiatives that make up the USA Freedom Corps. “[Civic participation] is not just waiting for potential terrorist

attacks — it’s emergencies such as tornado warnings and volunteers responding to those needs,” noted Bridgeland. It is the “increase in the neighborhood watch programs, training people who can respond to emergencies.” He cautioned against an entirely nationalized service in this country, which he believes could inhibit the spirit of volunteerism.

For more information on the **Rite of Passage Service Act**, please go to <http://www.house.gov/delauro/legislation.html>

“The culture of service is very important no matter whether you participate in a government-sponsored or locally sponsored program. After 9/11 people are coming to the realization that they do not need to be asked to serve,” Bridgeland concluded. “Service is fundamental to what it means to be an American.”

“A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum”: Ten Years of National Service

Les Lenkowsky discussed the challenges facing the Corporation for National Service and reforms



John Bridgeland, director, USA Freedom Corps

underway to “stay ahead of the storm.” He described the Corporation’s emphasis on performance measurement and the impressive outcomes obtained over the last decade, including improving the “health of seniors, the educational attainment of young people, the independence of folks on welfare or people who are disabled.” He also noted that the Corporation has made major changes in its financial and personnel systems, as well as reengineering the grant-making process to simplify the handling of grants, to improve the ability to

review and monitor programs, and to provide more training and technical assistance to grantees.

Lenkowsky stressed that the agency still has far to go. “We were conceived during the Bush 1 administration, born and developed through infancy during the Clinton administration, and now here in the Bush 2

administration, guess where we are? We are adolescents,” he concluded. “We have growing pains...and some parts have grown better than others.”

In addition to answering questions about political support for AmeriCorps and how future funds would be allocated, Lenkowsky responded to a question about the future of Learn and Serve America. His theory about why the program has not been significantly increased is because of its focus on “pedagogical service learning.” The problem is “it’s hard to get other people excited about pedagogy.” For this reason, he has tried to emphasize the program’s role in developing citizenship. “If people start thinking about Learn and Serve America as a program that builds the habits of citizenship in young people, we’ll gather more support,” he suggested.

Plenary Session: Expanding the Impact of National Service

A lively panel revealed strong views by engaging a



Dorothy Stoneman, president, YouthBuild USA;
Sarah Brown, executive director, National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

diverse group of experts on the utility and future of national service.

Moderator **Juan Williams**, National Public Radio senior correspondent, challenged participants to explain what does not work in national service.

Francisco Guajardo, founder and executive director of the Llano Grande Community Center, recalled efforts

to obtain AmeriCorps*VISTAs to help with his school-based youth center on the Texas border. He wanted more volunteers and more flexibility than the AmeriCorps*VISTA program could offer, and as a result, the Center created its own program.

James Firman, president and CEO of the National Council on the Aging, expressed similar frustration with national service, calling for more flexibility in Senior Corps programs and for greater inclusion of seniors in AmeriCorps.

Offering a contrasting opinion, **Reverend Wilson Goode, Sr.**, executive director of the Amachi Program and former mayor of Philadelphia, said he had found

*The **Amachi** program, run by Public/Private Ventures with AmeriCorps funding through the Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth and Family Services, uses AmeriCorps members placed with churches to recruit mentors for children of imprisoned parents.*

The outcomes resulting from mentor-child relationships have been very promising; pairings that lasted for more than one year (62% did) have impacted these children in many ways. They have begun to feel more confident about doing their school work, skipped fewer days of school, received higher grades, and were less likely to start using drugs and/or alcohol.

Please see <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/amachi.html> for more information.

AmeriCorps to be flexible and an extremely valuable resource. The Amachi program uses AmeriCorps members to recruit and supervise volunteer mentors from local churches. The mentors work with children of prisoners.

Sarah Brown, executive director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, contended that national service is not well understood

by organizations that are not part of the service field. For example, although several service-learning models are very effective at reducing teen pregnancy, organizations in her field are generally not aware of that fact. She argued that support for service would be more widespread if efforts were made to build partnerships outside of the service field.

Dorothy Stoneman, president of YouthBuild USA, described how her program is the result of the linkage of service, job training, and education. While she had suggestions to make AmeriCorps better fit the YouthBuild model — such as changing the structure of the living allowance — she felt advocacy would be better directed at seeking more resources, not changing regulations.

Mil Duncan, director of Community and Resource Development at the Ford Foundation and author of *Worlds Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America*, suggested that AmeriCorps plays an important role in building the infrastructure that enables small community-based organizations to mobilize volunteers.



Mil Duncan, Community and Resource Development director, the Ford Foundation, and **James Firman**, president and CEO, the National Council on the Aging

Juan Williams asked the panelists to comment on whether additional funds for national service are really necessary, and the correspondence to the utilization of current resources.

Jim Firman responded by questioning the purpose of national service — to be a resource to communities or to produce results independently? He contended that it is “more important for service programs to support and supplement

existing community infrastructures” rather than to create new service initiatives. Expanding and improving existing programs will bring new energy to the movement — when service programs are seen as an essential resource, community advocacy and grassroots support are able to leverage funding that new programs cannot access.

Rev. Goode began by recalling his first experience with national service at a local school, which closed every day at 3 pm; there were no evening programs. Because of AmeriCorps, the school could be kept open evenings and weekends, an important priority for the community. The Amachi

program reached out to AmeriCorps for help and found it was able to engage 20 volunteers at each church as a result. “There are a lot of problems that national service cannot solve,” he noted, “but there are some it can, and we need to allocate resources for it.”

Laura Lockwood, the founder of ManaTEEN and an AmeriCorps member, spoke of the tremendous interest in service among teens. The ManaTEEN club engages 12,000 teens; it received 400 applications for a handful

Service Learning and Teen Pregnancy

The Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy publication *Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy*, by Douglas Kirby, Ph.D., includes two service-learning models on its short list of programs that work to prevent teen pregnancy.

of AmeriCorps positions. While the different parts of AmeriCorps (VISTA, State and National, NCCC) can be confusing to community organizations because the AmeriCorps members in each program have different restrictions on their roles, she believes that the demand is there on the part of those who want to serve as well as from community organizations who want AmeriCorps members to work with them.

Juan Williams then asked who defines what national service can accomplish: “In order for national service to be successful, it should be as flexible as possible, and meet the needs that exist in communities, right?”

Mil Duncan responded that “Service is an investment in the power of individuals. . . . They are a resource for people ‘on the ground.’” **Francisco Guajardo** agreed. The purpose of national service should not be “to meet our needs, but to begin building on the assets of people who are there.” Several panelists agreed that the most important attribute of national service is its capacity to help local organizations carry out their missions.

Other Forum participants had strong views about the role of national service. **Carol Kuhre**, executive director of Rural Action, reminded the group that national service came to her community when the local people had created a strategy and sought help implementing it. “Appalachians don’t want to be ‘saved’

for the sixth time,” she noted. Instead, she worked with hundreds of people in Appalachia over a two-year period to identify their assets, develop a strategy, and obtain AmeriCorps*VISTA positions so they could place local people to perform the service.

Rev. Goode agreed. “The community itself decides what it wants. In fact, all 42 Amachi AmeriCorps Members are from the local congregations they are serving.”

Gene Sofer, partner in the Susquehanna Group, spoke from the audience, reminding the group that the AmeriCorps statute has 14 program models and allows applicants to create their own models if none of those listed fit. He also noted that even national AmeriCorps programs are invited into communities, not “parachuted in.”

Sister Katherine Corr, executive director of the Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Program, concurred. “Our program was just six mission volunteers before AmeriCorps,” she noted. “Now we’re 330” reaching 80,000 children.

Forum participants **Michael Tierney** and **Rachel Tompkins** spoke from the floor about the role of national service in rural areas. While Tierney raised the need to “tweak” the program to broaden its purposes,



Laura Lockwood, founder, ManaTEEN, and **Francisco Guajardo**, founder and executive director, Llano Grande Community Center



Reverend Wilson Goode, Sr., executive director, the Amachi Program, and **Juan Williams**, National Public Radio senior correspondent

he also said he thought it was hard for local people to affect policy. Tompkins cautioned that AmeriCorps “is always under attack for its survival,” and that the program is especially important to places that have scarce resources, such as rural communities.

Juan Williams invited panelists to make concluding comments. **Laura Lockwood** stressed that “AmeriCorps has given me the training and experience that I wouldn’t have had the chance to get,” which would help her develop grassroots projects. **Francisco Guajardo** called national service “absolutely essential” and deserving of greater investment. He challenged President Bush to match his “big talk” with resources.

Dorothy Stoneman concurred that even in the current fiscal environment, advocates should not be timid about seeking increased resources for service. She endorsed the concept of an eighth-grade service corps that had been discussed by Rep. Rosa DeLauro, and called for a dramatic increase in youth corps. Conservation corps

were started “for boys in the woods,” she quipped. “I’m for boys and girls in the hoods and woods.”

Sarah Brown, as an advocate for teen pregnancy prevention programs, noted that groups such as hers “need your service, while service programs such as AmeriCorps need our advocacy.” Mil Duncan agreed that creating service opportunities requires resources, and that as a nation we should invest in our future in this way.

Jim Firman argued that the nation’s greatest untapped resource is the time and talent of older people. “They vote,” he noted, “and could broaden the constituency” for national service.

Rev. Goode concluded by cautioning the audience about criticizing service. After 40 years in public service he has “learned if we start to pick at the edges, people will abolish the program.” He concluded, “We can’t afford to have any resources taken away.

Funding Perspectives on the Future of National Service

Susan Berresford, president of the Ford Foundation, closed the Forum with comments on the future of national service from a funder's perspective. She thanked Susan Stroud for organizing an important conversation about service as a vehicle for mobilizing people to address important social issues. The Ford Foundation has been a funder in the service field for many decades in the US and in other countries. The Foundation's support grows from a belief that service programs help people to develop civic awareness of the complexities of public issues, an understanding of social change, and provide the structure to support people to engage with important issues. Service programs can also help to create a sense of solidarity across lines of faith, income and ethnicity.

She articulated three roles for private funders in national service: (1) supporting innovation; (2) supporting "research about the effectiveness of the models that exist" and sharing it with practitioners around the world; and (3) convening "practitioners with policy makers for a possible dialogue, like this one, finding ways for advocacy, marketing and development of new ideas" in the US and around the world.

She also proposed a list of the things that need to be done:

- *Develop a clear vision about scale.* "If all our policy wishes came true, what is the scale we really want?"
- *Connect vision with context,* particularly in a policy climate of devolution of responsibility to states and a context of fiscal scarcity for the foreseeable future.
- *'Nail down' participant results.* "For example, we need to be able to say more about the way service by

young people helps develop their maturity and sense of purposefulness and efficacy. We need to say more about the ways people who participate in service become more knowledgeable about social issues and see connections between realities on the ground and policy. We need to be able to say more about how these experiences contribute to successful careers. And we need to say more about how these programs solve important problems or help to avoid problems developing."



- *Share the US experience* — particularly strategy, program design, and political organization — with an international network or practitioners and policy-makers.
- *Engage in a discussion of 'public morality'.* Over the course of the last few decades "we have become more preoccupied with private morality than public morality. Making responsible choices about one's life is important, but we cannot address large problems facing society one person at a time. For instance, we need a discussion about the decisions that public officials make regarding the use of public resources — whether

they are used to provide genuine opportunities for people who don't have opportunities, whether they build on the strength of communities that are there, whether they protect those who can't protect themselves."

Berresford concluded by reflecting on the role of service in this question of public morality — its role in mobilizing "people in their communities to work hard and to try to make things better for people who suffer in this country. I think national service has a role in rejuvenating a sense of public morality. And there needs to be a big public investment in service for us to realize the potential of service in mobilizing communities and promoting a sense of public morality."