



Americorps Monthly Report

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Organization Name: Boaz and Ruth, Inc.

Program Name: BRACE (Boaz & Ruth AmeriCorps Endeavor)

Name & Title of Reportee: Veronica Kerns / Site Administrator

Reporting Period: April, 2007

Date this report completed: May 14, 2007 at 8:31 AM

Approved By: Steve Whitman

Outputs: Briefly describe activities during the reporting period relative to your program's Performance Measures. Clearly state how and/or why the particular activity relates to the performance measure.

Needs and Services: The primary accomplishment for April was considered ambitious according to project director David Armington. The task was to finish up all the exterior painting, primarily the eaves and rafter tails, which are very ornate and require a fair amount of skill to cut in, in an effort to show the distinctness of the red paint against the coral paint. AmeriCorps members gained wonderful exterior painting skills while working hard trying to complete the exterior painting project. The outside of the building is substantially completed in terms of painting. Also, one of Richmond's foremost plasterers (Bill McAuthor) came and taught a class on plastering and plaster repair. Six members completed the class. Project Director David Armington, who is no slouch at plastering himself, was left with instructions on how to continue the plastering that remains to be done.

At this point there are two rooms that are finished, waiting for the decision to be made regarding what color they will be painted.

Of the plasterers that took the class there are three who demonstrated enough talent to be assigned the duty of working in the kitchen area unsupervised to complete all plastering there. There was a large window and vents that have been completely plastered over. They are working as fast as possible so all plastering will be done before the electricians are scheduled to come

Member Development: All AmeriCorps members attended The City of Richmond's Democracy Inclusion Forum held in April, 2007. The Democracy Inclusion Forum's purpose was to look for ways to improve the Democratic process.

The Forum presented AC members and university students along with people from all walks of life the opportunity to come and dialog with individuals they would never have an opportunity to rub elbows with. The meeting was set in an atmosphere that was comfortable, in a café setting at the (Virginia Commonwealth University) Segal Center.

There were two outstanding guest speakers: The Mayor of New Jersey, Cory Booker, and the First Black Governor in the United States, the City of Richmond's Mayor Doug Wilder, both of whom delivered excellent speeches.

Mayor Booker's speech was related to how one person can make a difference. He related this concept to his own personal experiences; the audience was moved and hung on his every word. Mayor Doug Wilder addressed several issues, but the one that stuck out for AC members was the issue regarding ex-offender re-entry. The BRACE AmeriCorps / Boaz & Ruth program is geared toward meeting the needs of ex-offenders. Mayor Wilder stated "the City of Richmond is examining the situation to formulate changes creating better circumstances that will modify the process of re-entry from prison to the community in a positive way". Hopefully the plan will address fines and penalties, child support, procuring identification necessary to get a job,

driver's licenses. These burdens made lighter and easier to overcome will help individuals gain employment more readily, decreasing recidivism markedly.

"Each AmeriCorps member walked away with their self esteem heightened," stated BRACE AmeriCorps Program Director Lloyd Price. Some members truly believe they can make a difference in their community and personal life. Many of our AmeriCorps members exclaimed that the meeting was good and the networking experience phenomenal. Members believe they have something to offer and people will listen to them. Who would think that a group of ex-offenders would be in an environment with political and affluent individuals, in a society where they are stereotyped and feared. AC member Leonard Bullock stated: "If change is going to be effected then I have to step up and be a part of that change. I can't expect people to carry the torch and carry the banner for me while I sit back and do nothing. I have to be active in that change as well."

Strengthening Communities: A volunteer work day was established by the Philip Morris Corporation and Elders Homes. There were over fifteen hundred people from Richmond and the surrounding area who participated. Calvin Carter and Barry Williams, BRACE AmeriCorps members, took on leadership roles in assisting them on some of the projects. Some of the residents received new porches; renovations of their kitchens with new amenities; roofs were repaired; others had ramps built to their houses and a lot of landscaping was done. They renovated or repaired over 45 houses in the community. The project provided AC members with the opportunity to give something back to their community. The event must have felt like Christmas in April.

Sustainability: Describe your program's efforts during this reporting period toward sustainability (defined in terms of media and marketing, volunteer/leader development, collaboration, fundraising/resource development or other areas that may assist the program toward self-sufficiency).

In the month of April Boaz & Ruth started a new business, called Mighty Mowers which is a horticulture service. Boaz & Ruth supplies the trucks, manpower, expertise and machinery. The first contract was signed in April to maintain twenty-seven acres. There are two other contracts for smaller jobs, thus the Mighty Mowers project is off to a great start, bringing Boaz & Ruth just a little closer to self-sustainability.

Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.

Boaz & Ruth's goal for the month of April was making that which is already good, better. One thing that was addressed was restructuring and aligning jobs.

What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?

Development of job descriptions, organizational chart showing all departments with the duties of each outlined. Evaluations for all levels were conducted, for staff and all members.

Assistance: Our program needs the following assistance from the Office on Volunteerism and Service (please be specific).

No information reported

Special Events: Describe a special event that your program has organized or participated in. Examples include service projects, community planning meetings, recognition events, etc.

April proved to be a month full of Special Events at Boaz & Ruth, Inc., along with the "Democracy Inclusion Forum and Volunteer Work Day the following also happened:

a. The Governors Award for Community Volunteerism was bestowed upon Boaz & Ruth, holding Boaz & Ruth in high esteem regarding their contribution to volunteerism. The award was for outstanding services performed.

All AmeriCorps members attended the ceremony; the opportunity for networking was amazing. Influential people from different backgrounds, status and cultures were there in droves. AC members took full advantage of the chance to once again share the Boaz & Ruth mission with many other organizations and agency key members.

b. April 27th Boaz & Ruth held its (Diamond Debut 2nd Annual Gala), presented by the following sponsors: Bank of America, (Troutman Saunders Attorneys At Law), Sun Trust, Owens & Minor, CarMax, First Market Bank, Martha's Mixtures, Delegate Jennifer McClellan, Project Solutions, St. Michael's Catholic Church, (Thompson, Siegel & Walmsley). This year we went a step further by starting the silent auction on the Boaz & Ruth web site. Individuals were able to go on line and view items to be auctioned and place silent bids. The event was exciting; you could feel the energy floating around the room during the live auction. The turn out for the event was much larger than last year when the First Gala took place. There were over 300 people from Richmond and the surrounding area in attendance. The event was a complete success.

Member Highlight: Provide a brief description of one member's role in your program, along with a two or three sentence response from the member.

Norman Thomas started the BRACE AmeriCorps program in February 2007. While interviewing Norman I got the impression that he thinks Boaz & Ruth is the best thing invented since Apple Pie. He responded to the adjacent questions as follows:

a. Going to my classes each day is something I look forward to, the conflict resolution class has provided me certain concepts I can use to help me respond when I am stressed out, angry or confused. After class I go to my life lab where I am in training in the field of building and home restoration.

b. My most enlightening experience has been to find out that I can believe in something, trust someone. This is something that I have found since coming to the Boaz & Ruth program.

c. The realization that I can be responsible, which is something I never thought I could be. It may be simple to some people but I don't think I have ever been responsible before.

d. If you have not heard about Boaz & Ruth, it is the place to come to when you are in need of help and ready to make some positive changes in your life.

Notes: Please list any additional information that you believe the Office on Volunteerism and Service needs to have.

No information reported

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1 Comments

[Steve Whitman](#) said on 5/17/07 at 10:42 AM
Veronica,

Terrific report - as usual! I appreciate the enthusiasm with which you communicate the activities and accomplishments of Boaz and Ruth!

Great job!
Steve

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Office on Volunteerism & Community Service | Virginia Department of Social Services
7 North 8th Street | Richmond, VA 23219
Toll free in VA: (800) 638-3839 | Direct: (804) 726-7065 | Fax: (804) 726-7024 | Email:
info@vaservice.org