



Americorps Monthly Report

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Organization Name: Boaz and Ruth, Inc.

Program Name:

Name & Title of Reportee: Veronica Kerns

Reporting Period: April, 2008

Date this report completed: May 8, 2008 at 9:14 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: During the month of April AmeriCorps members were instructed on the subject of electrical wiring and obtained on the job experience. They had to pull the old wiring and replace it with new wire; this was not an easy task. Members had to remove wire from a vast amount of space in the building. The back room area that leads to the clothing store is huge and three quarters of that was re-wired. In addition the clothing store has new electrical wiring. After much of the re-wiring was done new light fixtures were installed in both the back room space that will be used for inventory storage and in the Clothing Store There is still more wiring that must be done. New members starting the program in May will have the opportunity to train in that field also. It was very impressive to walk through the areas that now have new lights and see the old building illuminated where once mostly darkness existed.

In addition members were trained in the field of installing telephone lines. The 10,000 square ft. building had no telephone lines at all. It now has three or four lines in the office spaces and one phone line in the clothing store. The clothing store was given a name in the month of April, it is now known as (Sunny Days).

A new office space was created in the mechanics shop area in the 2nd street side of the building. That part of the building is being used as the Boaz & Ruth's Furniture Restoration venue. AmeriCorps members were given instructions on how to measure the wood used to construct walls; how to use the electrical table saws, how to cut beams used to make struts, the measurements that are between each strut, the use of levelers and how to use drills. Old locks were taken out and replaced with new ones exposing members to locksmith skills. Members also began painting the exterior of the building. With so much renovation work that still must be completed AmeriCorps members will obtain several marketable skills.

Member Development: AmeriCorps member Blaine Lay started the Boaz & Ruth program in September, 2007. Since becoming a member Blaine has been afforded the opportunity to attend a class on (Creating Winning Entrepreneurs). It was hosted by the Richmond Economic Development Corporation. Class topics included: small business resources and the business plan, small business legal issues, understanding your business financials, zoning requirements, licensing, marketing and financing. Blaine stated that the experience proved to be very educational.

In addition Blaine attended one of Boaz & Ruth's many networking opportunities: (Risk Taking for Entrepreneurs). It was hosted by the Richmond Retail Merchants Association. The partnership established by Boaz & Ruth with the Richmond Retail Merchants Association has

afforded many members a glimpse of how social networking can open the door to business relationships. Blaine has also undertaken the task of note taking at staff meetings and distributing the information to all members. Blaine is being provided with the opportunity to develop administrative skills, how to own and or operate a small business and will be attending two Programs for Non-Profits this summer:

- A two-day class entitled; (A Brief History of Social Justice Movements and Their Tactics in the 20th Century).
- A two-day class entitled; (Creating Your Future: Strategic Thinking for Non-Profits).

Blain is taking in more knowledge daily and putting it to practical use.

Strengthening Communities: Boaz & Ruth has a partnership with the local Bank of America in Richmond's Highland Park area. Boaz & Ruth's Payroll Specialist met with the Branch Manager of the Bank of America and it exchanged information. Established that each Boaz & Ruth member has a Virginia Identification card / Virginia drivers license or an Identification card issued by the Social Service Department. Also, each member must have a copy of their Social Security Card before they can become a Boaz & Ruth / AmeriCorps member.

Once an understanding was reached and the partnership developed the Bank of America now honors the Boaz & Ruth Identification Cards. In effect Boaz & Ruth members can go to that one particular Bank of America and cash their pay checks and open up checking and savings accounts. Providing this kind of service to ex-offenders helps to build self confidence and can lead to establishing credit.

The services provided by Bank of America gives members an alternative, they don't have to use the Check Cashing stores that add on exuberant surcharges.

Because of the partnership with Bank of America Boaz & Ruth members can keep money they had to spend to cash the check. Money that they can use to support their efforts in taking care of them selves and their families, making the community stronger.

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).

During the month of April Boaz & Ruth's Diamond Café' and Catering Department relocated across the street to the Fire Station Mini Mall. The Diamond Café' has taken over the Open Air Restaurant that was operated by (Hidden Treasures). It took a couple of weeks for people in the community to realize the Café' was across the street. Once it was common knowledge the Diamond Café' began to do brisk business.

Wonderful (Soul Food) meals have been added to the menu providing a variety of soul food dishes that only mama could make. Food Services Manager Mark McAllister stated that having a larger selection of foods to choose from helped to increased business.

Also, every other (Saturday) of each month the Diamond Café' boasts a wonderful Fish Fry which has been a tremendous success. It is anticipated that the two venues working closely together will be prosperous bring Boaz & Ruth closer to becoming self sustaining.

Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.

One challenge is trying to raise funds to get the a new roof for the 10,000 square ft. building and the Boaz & Ruth 3030 Meadowbridge Road location. Even with the effort that has went into roof repairs both buildings still have leakage.

What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?

Specific proposals for grant funds have been created and research has been done on foundations that may be interested in supporting that particular need.

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.

Boaz & Ruth AmeriCorps members were invited to attend the 2008 Virginia Conference on Volunteerism and Community Service. Initially when going to the event was proposed to members some became sulky. They came up with various reasons why they did not want to go. What happened was once BRACE members arrived at Virginia Beach where the conference was held their countenance changed from dull to bright. AmeriCorps generously provided hotel rooms on the beach front and the view was spectacular.

After checking into the Hotel members broke up and went to different workshops. It was not long before they were feasting on great food at the (Caregivers Awards Luncheon). On the second day after the first workshop BRACE members were making statements such as:

- This is like changing classes in school.
- Boy I really got a lot out of that workshop.
- Let me check the schedule to see what the next workshop is.
- This is a wonderful place to be.
- The networking opportunities are endless.

After taking a survey it was concluded most of the members were not ready to leave on Friday.

BRACE members really began to enjoy the Conference. Boaz & Ruth AmeriCorps members could be seen networking everywhere, even with Governor Tim Kaine. The most impressive thing that took place was how some members stated they received a lot of information which could be benefited from.

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.

Jullian Brigman started the Boaz & Ruth/AmeriCorps program in the month of October, 2007. Jullian is very quiet most of the time. She is a friendly and warm hearted person. She has proven to be responsible, reliable and honest always looking for a way to be of service and learn. When interviewed she responded as follows:

a. Some of my classes are between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. during Boaz & Ruth's regular class hours. One of the morning classes I truly profited from is the (Core Belief) class taught by Paul Morgan. In the Core Belief classes I learned the difference between a healthy relationship and a codependent relationship. I realized that codependency can happen in all of my relationships with people such as:

- Intimate relationships.
- Friendships.
- Relationships with co-workers.

I also learned that codependency can be related to a need for outside validation. In addition I have training sessions later on in the day based on my instructor's schedule. My interest surrounds interior design and retail sales. By being a member of Boaz & Ruth I have been afforded the opportunity to be trained by the owner of (Franco's Fine Clothier from

Franco) retail store. The shop is located in what is considered a cheek expensive shopping district in Richmond's Carrytown area.

b. My most enlightening experience thus far has been self empowerment and recognizing that I am a very creative person.

c. I am now more confident, more positive and have been trained not see problems as obstacles but as opportunities.

d. I would tell anybody that the Boaz & Ruth / AmeriCorps program has a lot to offer. However; that person must be ready for commitment and have a heart that is ready for change.

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 5/8/08 at 10:59 AM

Veronica,

The April monthly report is very good - a pleasure to read about all the great things Boaz and Ruth members are involved in!

I have asved the report as approved.

Thanks!

Steve

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