



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: January, 2008
Date this report completed: February 8, 2008 at 7:57 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 January 2008 Master Craftsman Jim Devito reported that extensive repairs were made on the roof of the 10,000 square feet Benefield Building. The roof was reconditioned, new roofing material was applied, the men were instructed on how to lie what is called a roof membrane system. In the process they were taught how to apply heated tar. The roof still has a lot of work that must be done on it; however the process of repair was started. BRACE members were taught how to install conduits to drain the water that runs off underneath the roof.

Additionally, in the building area to be used for the new clothing store, floor repairs have started. The floors were scrapped and painted in some areas. Repair work was done on the walls, taping and compound was applied. The walls were sanded and painted. The front show room windows of the clothing store were restored. Trainees were taught how to set molding for the windows.

Member Development: During the month of January a question was proposed to apprentices, "what can be done to keep new trainees"? AmeriCorps member Shaun Walters really took that question seriously. He took on a leadership role and spear headed a project called Partnership Support System. In the weekly Boaz & Ruth family group meeting Shaun proposed the idea to all the AmeriCorps members who in turn put their heads together and came up with a list of suggestions. The end out come of this effort has established five partners composed of AmeriCorps members who will assist new members with getting acclimated to the program. To see a new buddy system thought of by the Senior AmeriCorps members and implemented, is to witness true member development.

Robert Lewis achieved Ambassador of the month status in the month of January 2008. The Ambassador of the month is a trainee who through exceptional performance and attitude during their tenure in the program has demonstrated the ideals of Boaz & Ruth. If a stranger unfamiliar with the organization were to look upon the individual, they would see an ethic and demeanor reflective of the best of the programs. The title honors the recipient with certain benefits, but ultimately signifies and individual's extraordinary development as a professional and responsible person.

Strengthening Communities: The New Fire House 15 - (Shops & Restaurant) Mini Mall is now open for business. It is bring new business to the community, adding to the revitalization of the Highland Park business corridor. It is now home to the following business: Book Browsers, a used book store, Dyme Tech, a computer resale and repair shop, Everything Unlimited, a variety clothing store and Kate's Beauty World, an herbs and beauty shop. In

addition Hidden Treasure, a restaurant owned and operated by Norman Jordan is center stage occupying the large bay area. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and offers catering services.

In renovating the historic firehouse, Boaz & Ruth has trained and employed over 30 formerly incarcerated men over the 18 months of renovation. Most of the men were part of Boaz & Ruth's AmeriCorps program. We are grateful for their work, for the work of the many staff and tradesmen who shared their skill, and for the support of the many donors and volunteers from throughout the Richmond community who made this project possible.

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 January Boaz & Ruth's Diamond Café' held it's own. It is now doing a brisk business on a daily basis. People in the community and surrounding area are there early in the morning picking up a cup of coffee or breakfast items and can be seen throughout the day patronizing the business. That is something that could not be reported when the café' first got started. It is safe to say that Boaz & Ruth's Diamond Café' is bringing the program a little closer to being self sustaining.

Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.

Coming up with a new interviewing process for apprentices.

What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?

A new interviewing process was implemented. A matrix system was devised that would show conditions potential apprentices are faced with. The devised matrix takes a look at strengths and limitations such as: does the person have family support, transportation problems, substance abuse issues, is the individual emotional and mental stability. This information enables staff to better gauge whether or not a person may be able to start and finish the program.

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 held its 7th Annual Martin Luther King Celebration on January 21, 2008. The service took place at the 5th Street Baptist Church. Over 190 people were in attendance from the community and Richmond's surrounding area. Part of the ceremony was a candle light walk from Boaz & Ruth to the church with The Mount Zion Choir leading everyone in song, singing We Shall Overcome. The Keynote Speaker: Reverend Tyrone Nelson of 6th Mount Zion Baptist Church delivered a powerful speech on the topic of "People Who Need A Second Chance". Former Governor Gilmore gave an inspiring speech on how he fought to keep Martin Luther King's Holiday separate from Presidents Day. After the services at the 5th Street Baptist Church, dinner was served at Boaz & Ruth where individuals shared food and camaraderie in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King. Over all it was a wonderful celebration and a great 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.

I asked the Job Training Director who should be interviewed for the month of January 2008 and he recommended AmeriCorps member Larry Riddick. He stated he has watched Larry grow

since coming to Boaz & Ruth, that Larry is very positive and sets good standards for the other apprentices. Larry Riddick started the AmeriCorps program at Boaz & Ruth in the month of September, 2007. When asked to answer the Member Highlight questions Larry responded as follows:

- a. I am getting a lot out of the morning classes. The Conflict Resolution class has been intriguing; I have been able to use some of the conflict de-escalating tools in my family life and with friends. I have gotten better at dealing with relationships, family, friends and co-workers as a direct result of participating in the Core Belief classes.
- b. My most enlightening experience took place during a Beyond Dialog session. The work shop afforded me the opportunity to be in a diverse group setting and gain insight on how other people view life. Hearing tje different point of view from Europeans as well as African Americans caused me to have a paradigm shift which has enriched my understanding of both races.
- c. I have become a more caring person, involved in the community and I am more concerned with my family. The training classes on relationships at Boaz & Ruth have helped me to relate better with my wife, family, friends and co-workers.
- d. I would tell people God is great. That this program is a spiritually based program and God can be found in every aspects of it.

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 2/11/08 at 02:38 PM

Veronica,

The monthly report looks great - a delightful read as always!!

I have saved the report as Approved.

Thanks!

Steve

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