



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 Kenrs

Reporting Period: May, 2007

Date this report completed: June 8, 2007 at 2:55 PM

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: At the end of May, 2007, AC member Melvin Scarborough took me on a tour of the Old Historic Fire Station, which serves as a "life lab/work site" and is a restoration project at the Boaz & Ruth program. During the tour Melvin listed the areas of the project worked on during the month of May. Melvin explained what had been accomplished: all of the exterior painting was completely touched up and finished, the outside of the building has a pristine appearance, a person could assume that vendors are about to move in and start selling. The transformation of the interior is a marvel to look at; the metamorphosis that has taken place is astounding. The side walls and ceiling in the central area of the building were labored on extensively in May. AC members have been trained to use heat guns and small scraping tools to remove peeling paint by hand in an effort to preserve as much of the Fire Station's original framework as possible. I want to add that the wooden frames of the original doors had many layers of paint that had to be removed before sanding could take place. It was and is a very tedious task to remove the numerous layers of peeling paint by hand. Despite the labor involved, the side walls were finished in May. The wooden framework for the doors appeared to be 75% finished and the ceiling, as appalling in appearance as it was, is about 45% complete. Melvin also explained that the plastering skills learned were put to use. Many holes were repaired using this method.

In April there were two rooms finished, awaiting the decision of what color to paint them. In May the color was decided and the rooms are now painted. The two finished rooms will serve as great models of what the others will look like. Already, potential vendors have submitted applications to rent/occupy space that will be used as stores.

The area where the fire trucks were parked and stored awaiting a fire alarm call is rapidly changing. The Old Historic Fire Station is well on its way to becoming the envisioned Mini-Mall.

Member Development: AC members Alan Webb and Leonard Bullock, Charles Fuller, Beatrice Robinson and Staff member Megan Rollins implemented a project in the month of May inspired by other members in the program. They created a Boaz & Ruth Newsletter called Da Fence. It has the caption News and Notes by Us, For Us. On a daily basis all members look forward to breaks. During break time members go to the back area of Boaz & Ruth by the fence and socialize, gossip, drink coffee and just mingle during break time. Many issues are debated, and there is bantering and joking, at this all-purpose meeting place. It is a lot like at home where families gather in the kitchen and communication begins: sharing of feelings, talk that leads to a debate, laughter, a place where bonding transpires. The connecting team Megan, Alan, Beatrice, Leonard and Charles created the Newsletter in an effort to dispense a written account of all news and events that have taken place, thus when we all gather at the fence, news

and events have been shared through the newsletter and more fact that fiction is passed on to those who didn't read it. Under the supervision of staff member Megan Rollins, the AC members are gaining valuable journalist skills.

Rumors, debated issues, information they guessed about is now in a written format. When the first issue was distributed in a classroom setting with all members and staff in attendance, it was agreed that the paper will be a teaching mechanism. All AC and Boaz & Ruth members will be able to contribute to the development of the newsletter's upcoming issues. AC members have truly shown a talent for journalism, tracking down factual information, asking the right questions, networking their way through the process to gather information necessary to create the newsletter. The leadership roles they took on paves the way for others.

We also, want to mention that for five months, Beatrice Robinson and Leonard Bullock worked hard at developing Leadership and Group Facilitation Skills at Connecting Communities Fellowship Program. In May Beatrice and Leonard graduated with flying colors.

Latasha Williams earned her G.E.D in the month of May.

Also, by way of member development, we can report that five AC members have earned the privilege to drive again. Now licensed by the State of Virginia to drive a motor vehicle are Latasha Williams, Leonard Bullock, Kevin Hopkins, Calvin Carter and Edbert Smith.

Strengthening Communities: The author of the book HOW TO MAKE A GIRAFFE SMILE, Hugh Gouldthorpe, did a workshop on LEADERSHIP and the importance of what it takes to be a TEAM. A caption on the front of his book reads; "Great leaders and organizations, like Giraffes, stand head and shoulders above the crowd. They smile when they reach new heights or help others do the same". Members are still talking about that workshop, many are practicing ethics learned: being of service, communicate everything you can, don't be afraid, be a Pro, it takes heart and soul, there is no "I" in TEAM, have a dream, don't procrastinate, the good "F" words Fast, Flexibility, Focus, Friendliness, Fun. There were many other principles taught on that day, 5/21/07.

I am mentioning this workshop in strengthening communities because these ideals leave the classroom with individuals who share them with family, friends and the communities they live in.

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).

The new Boaz & Ruth retail sales store in Richmond City's elite business district corridor of Carytown flourished in the month of May. Sales were great. Combined with the other venues of Boaz & Ruth, it contributed to the organization's revenue substantially. There is a tremendous amount of foot traffic up and down Cary Street. From 10:00 in the morning until the end of the business day, there are always customers on the sales floor shopping. Martha Rollins, Boaz & Ruth's CEO, generously provided the Boaz & Ruth program with the opportunity to use the building where the store is housed as a retail sales store inventoried with furniture and home accessories. As in this case, when there is an opportunity to generate income, the Boaz & Ruth program seizes it in the endeavor to bring the organization a little closer to becoming self-sustaining.

Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.

One of the challenges was losing several members.

What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?

Staff is developing an improved procedure for screening individuals before they actually are assigned to AC positions or any other position in the organization.

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.

It was a monumental moment for Boaz & Ruth, members of the community, and people from Richmond and the surrounding area when the Giles Street House completion ceremony took place on May 15th, 2007. The gathering was held at the Giles Street House where the front yard was full of people who were volunteers, community members, and contributors toward the project, including Jim Devito, a man who tirelessly gave of his time freely to supervise the whole project until it was complete. After the house was toured and marveled at by many who had seen the shape it was in before restoration was started, we all went over to the new restoration project in the Old Historic Fire Station which is being renovated and restored to be used as a Mini-Mall and open-air restaurant. Both buildings were blessed by Reverend Rosa Jiggetts, much gratitude was bestowed on volunteers, emotions ran high and a sense of accomplishment was the general consensus.

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.

Melvin Scarborough started the AC program in February, 2007. It is not often that one gets to meet a person with a personality that is mild mannered and pleasant to be around. A social worker told Melvin that Boaz & Ruth would be an ideal place to start his life over at. His first impression of Boaz & Ruth was quiet and serene. With all the activity that goes on around here, I don't think that impression lasted long. He responded to questions as follows:

a. "As an active member I approach each day with enthusiasm." Melvin thinks the classes are very enlightening and that they are having a notable influence on him. He states that that Paul Morgan's Core Belief class has been the most beneficial so far. Melvin said the Core Belief class has provided him with an improved awareness of self and is the basis by which he has become more contented and spiritual. "I see things now in a broader perspective." After class Melvin goes to his life lab at the Old Historic Fire Station where he is learning home and building restoration. Some of the skills learned are carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring, painting and plastering.

b. Melvin claims the most enlightening thing that has happened to him is that his spirituality has been awakened. "I now feel more worth, valuable. Life has more meaning to me regarding my journey in this life."

c. "I have changed by being more responsible, especially as a single parent. I have grown a lot taking on all my responsibilities, which I have never done before. I feel more complete now taking on the fatherly role."

d. "I believe that Boaz & Ruth is a program started by God. If you are a part of this program you will experience a transitional transformation that will elevate your conscious to a place of positivity."

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 6/13/07 at 11:57 AM
Veronica,

Great report as usual!!

Keep up the good work!!

Steve

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