



## Americorps Monthly Report

[« Back to Report Listing](#)

[- Review Comments](#)

**Organization Name:** Boaz and Ruth, Inc.

**Program Name:** BRACE (Boaz & Ruth AmeriCorps Endeavor)

**Name & Title of Reportee:** Veronica Kerns

**Reporting Period:** November, 2007

**Date this report completed:** December 10, 2007 at 11:50 AM

**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 November retailers began the process of moving in display cases and furniture at the Old Historic Fire Station Mini Mall. A few community members are street vendors and have expressed hopes of being able to leave stock at the site that they sell from. This will relieve them of having to cart inventory back home on a daily basis. Occupancy of the building by vendors could take place during the week of December 3rd thru 7th, 2007.

The floor in the main room at the Fire Station was repainted in two different colors. This gave the Fire Station's bay area floor a new look. The men's bathroom was changed to a unisex handicap bathroom. The cobble stone wall was completely reassembled / constructed on the other side of the Fire Station. The craftsman ship it depicts looks as if it were done by a professional mason; when in fact it was done by tutored AmeriCorps trainees.

In addition the small building adjacent to the Fire Station had its exterior stucco finished and received a fresh paint job. The inside was gutted / removal of all rotted material and debris. The walls are ready for (rufins) that is, installation of all electrical wiring that will remain inside of the walls. In addition the moisture barriers were completed.

Small wooden moldings that section off glass in the windows had to be recreated and the frame work re-done. This was accomplished, thus the original windows were restored, painted and installed. The original doors of the small building were restored, painted and installed. All of the windows and one door were completely boarded up on the small building. However; the building now has an entirely new look. The work done in November on the building adjacent to the Fire Station, the Fire Station and the cobble stone wall outside of the Fire Station afforded AmeriCorps members learning experiences and knowledge / skills gained.

**Member Development:** In the month of November an assessment was done on seven AmeriCorps members, who will be graduating in the month of December, 2007. These members will move from the Senior Apprentice status to Post Graduates and continue in the program. The seven AC members that will graduate are:

Norman Mayo, Dwight Claxton, Norman Thomas, Melvin Scarborough, Jeanette Cain, Roxanne Davis and Kevin Hopkins. Listed below are some of their achievements:

Active relationship with mentors, Active relationships with family and support network, Some have all legal problems resolved, Attending G.E.D. classes, Attending N/A meetings, Beyond

Dialog Facilitation, Completing application & entry assessments to enroll in college, Completed Community Foundation Program course, Completed parole requirements, Completed photography class at VCU, Completed plastering class, Completed stone mason class, Completed Toastmasters speeches, Consistently contributed to classes, Development of accountability, Drug free for 3 years and some 18 months, Earned G.E.D., Obtained drivers license, Spiritual growth, Have gotten bank account since entering Boaz & Ruth program, Have own apartment, Installed HVAC system, Involved in church activities, Leadership role on Mountain Movers project, Learned how to use calculator, Learned computer system, Learned dry wall skills, Set up plan to pay court cost, House master at Giles Street House, Learned customer service, Learned how to be leader of family, Learned how to better resolve conflict, Learned how to run a business, Learned painting skills, Learned sheet rock skills, Learned value of antiques, Learning Access Data Base, Obtained a full time job, Obtained an automobile.

The list is much longer than what I have listed in this report, when viewed by anyone the milestone each AmeriCorps member has achieved is impressive

**Strengthening Communities:** During the month of November Boaz & Ruth was involved in the November 14th, 2007 University of Richmond Retreat in the capacity of catering the event. This provided an excellent opportunity for Boaz & Ruth members to network with University of Richmond students and staff. Also, on November 13th and 27th Part 2 and Part 3 of the Beyond Dialog series was held with the Centenary Presbyterian Church and Asbury Baptist Church. The two churches intentionally came together to cross racial barriers.

On November 28th, Boaz & Ruth was provided with the opportunity to cater a speaker event at the First Presbyterian Church providing the opportunity to network with church members. Affording the First Presbyterian church members the opportunity to gauge for them selves whether or not to fear ex-offenders as they have been stereo typed by society.

On November 29th some of Boaz & Ruth's AC members attended the Homeward's Project Solution Providers seminar at Richmond's downtown Convention Center. AmeriCorps members were provided with the opportunity to sign up for homeownership through the Habitat for Humanity program. In the month of December one AmeriCorps member will be working with Habitat for Humanity in building their own home. The building site will be located across the street from the Boaz & Ruth building located on Meadowbridge Road.

All of the above mentioned events provides the opportunity for (word of mouth) advertising which is considers a true resource of the Boaz & Ruth program. "Word of Mouth", is a major tool used to inform the community and surrounding area of Boaz & Ruth's services and vision. These services provide help to community members, participants in the program and individuals in Richmond's surrounding area.

**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 Boaz & Ruth Diamond Catering Department has expanded in size and is now located at 3096 Meadowbridge Road right up the street from the main facilities operations building. It has a large kitchen providing much more space for training apprentices and to do catering jobs. In the month of November the Diamond Catering Department out sourced many catering jobs serving more than 300 people. The business provided box lunches, hot lunches and hot dinners with competitive low prices which awarded Boaz & Ruth the contracts for catered events. The department has move from 2 to 3 catered events a month to as many as 10 or more. Needless to say the Diamond Catering venture is bring Boaz & Ruth a little closer to becoming self sustaining.

**Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.**

One challenge faced during the month of November was devising a good to great method of gauging personal growth changes in members.

**What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?**

Staff member and teacher Fran Kelly has developed a method titled: "Measuring the Unmeasurable". OBSERVING CHANGES. Fran has implemented an assessment portfolio that instructs each member to "Think about the following categories and determine how you would score yourself.

Listed categories are:

- (1) Self Esteem, (2) Healthy Relationships,
- (3) Healthy Connection with Family Members,
- (4) Self Discipline (5) Spiritual Growth,
- (6) Citizenship, (7) Leadership, (8) Ability to work Independently, (9) Work Ethics.

In the month of December results will be in and the process will provide additional results that can be assessed weekly, monthly and quarterly, gauging progress made and areas that need work.

**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.**

Bank awards nonprofit \$200,000 grant.

Bank of America honored Boaz & Ruth for community efforts. On Friday, November 2, 2007 Boaz & Ruth received a \$200,000 unrestricted grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation. The award ceremony took place at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Boaz & Ruth was labeled: Neighbor Builders as part of the foundation's Neighborhood Excellence Initiative program. As an organization Boaz & Ruth will also receive leadership training for one executive and for one up-and-coming executive.

"The NEI (Neighborhood Excellence Initiative) award recipients who show the kind of leadership and dedication that Bank of America believes is essential to the health and vitality of our community," said Tom Goode, Richmond market president of Bank of America.

NEI began in 2004. This was the first time Richmond was included. Boaz & Ruth was described as providing life skills and business training for people making the transition from incarceration to freedom. Founded five years ago by Martha Rollins, the program has about 100 clients in various classes and paid positions and is operating six businesses.

**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.**

Shawn Walters had been waiting for quite some time trying to get into the Boaz & Ruth program to be an apprentice. In September, 2007 he was afforded the opportunity to start the program as an AmeriCorps member. Shaun is 39 years old, a native of Richmond, Virginia. After returning home from incarceration he has made every effort to improve his life.

a. He described a typical day at Boaz & Ruth by mentioning the morning two hour classes. Shaun stated: "the Spirituality Class has been the most informative for me. It has brought more substance to my life". Shaun says looking at the Christian faith and comparing it to the Muslim faith has been an enlightening experience for him. In addition, Shaun has been

assigned to the Catering Division of the program. He requested to be in the Catering life/lab and has enrolled in a culinary class at J. Sergeants Reynolds Community College.

b. Shaun said his most enlighten experience has been to become a part of an organization that is tight-knit and harmonious. He said "I never dreamed I would see so many people on one accord in my life time working to achieve some many positive things".

c. Since becoming a member of Boaz & Ruth Shaun stated that he has become more responsible, organized and accountable. He also, spoke about the energy that he was using to make a buck in the streets by (slight of hand). Shaun said "I am learning to use my innate entrepreneurial abilities in a legal productive way".

d. When asked what great thing he would say to someone about this program Shaun responded: "I would tell them this program is really great! It is the place to be for someone who wants to change their life in a positive way. I would recommend Boaz & Ruth to anyone whom I feel is ready to make that change".

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

No information reported

[« Back to Report Listing](#)

## 1 Comments

[Steve Whitman](#) said on 12/13/07 at 03:17 PM  
Veronica,

The November monthly report is terrific, as usual!! I have saved it as Approved.

Thanks!  
Steve

## Add a Comment

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