



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

Reporting Period: October, 2007

Date this report completed: November 8, 2007 at 4:56 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: During the month of October AmeriCorps members laid the foundation for a new wall to be erected at the Old Historic Fire Station. It will be a new wall made from old stones. The stones being used came from the wall built when the Fire Station was first made. The original wall was torn down by AmeriCorps members to make way for the new parking lot.

There is some history behind the stones use to form the original wall. The stones are originally from England. I was told by the instructor that in 1800's and 1900's English ships carried stone in the bottom base of ships for balance. Once the ships arrived to port here in North America the stones were use in trade and replaced with cargo obtained. The cargo in turn would replace the stones and keep the ships balance. Thus, some of the cobble stone to be found in North America today was imported from England.

Boaz & Ruth hired a professional Mason to instruct AmeriCorps members in the field of masonry. AmeriCorps members are learning skills such as: digging the trench hole for the footing, placing grating stakes used for measuring, poring cement according to measurements, use of a level, use of margin trials/spades, use of point trails/spades, picks, shelves and concrete finishing.

In addition to the new wall being erected on the opposite side of the Old Historic Fire Station the small building adjacent to it is being restored. In October the process of restoring the stucco on the outside wall of the building began. The new stucco has the appearance of freshly glazed ceramic. The interior floor is made up of cobble stones and will be left in place, other than that the small building is going to have a complete overhaul. AmeriCorps members have already begun the process of installing moister barriers for the purpose of preventing mold that can cause structural damage.

AmeriCorps members James Vincent, Michael Waddy, Charles Thomas, Norman Thomas, Barry Williams, Calvin Carter and Carlton Dickerson are well on the way to developing masonry skills that can be used in the commercial job market.

Member Development: Michael Waddy started as an AmeriCorps member in September, 2007 at the Boaz & Ruth program. The first impression a person would get from Michael is that he is very serious about applying his self. In the Boaz & Ruth class room setting he sits quietly observing and listening. When someone is called upon to take on a leadership role Michael is consistently willing to assume that position. He is meticulous when following instructions given by teachers. Many times the large group of AmeriCorps members are broken

up into smaller groups and called upon to come up with material on class room topics. Michael does a great job of communicating his colleague's / fellow class mate's concepts and is chosen by peers to represent the group when making presentations.

One of Michael's aspirations is to develop a (Specialty Trade), he has selected Masonry. He is the first member to report for his life/lab after class which demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility. The wall being constructed at the Fire Station will extend from the side of the building down to the corner, four feet around the curve. As Michael is taught the skills of masonry he will be receiving hands on experience, which will build confidence as he gains expertise in the field.

Strengthening Communities: During the month of October Boaz & Ruth staff and all members participated in the Myers Briggs personality assessment. This is done in an effort to assess each individual's characteristics, attributes, strengths, weakness and personality types. Once this information is collected all members and staff met with the instructor who illustrated each person's personality type. Many members and staff share the same traits/characteristics. Each person receives an assessment from the instructor and is afforded the opportunity to receive feed back from the group. Most members walk away with a better understanding of self and others. In addition the type of work a person may be suited for is gauged.

A capacity to discern what may be considered irritant, negative qualities in others and self can now be perceived as simple differences in some cases. Participants report that the insight gained from the Myers Briggs testing is enlightening and useful. Acceptance of other people's differences and patience is developed. It enables participants to better work and socialize together regardless of how different their backgrounds and beliefs may be. A better understanding of self, people in the community and in their families is achieved.

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).

Boaz & Ruth's Parable Restoration shop sits quietly on the corner of 2nd and Meadowbridge Road. It is hard to be seen by drivers and people on foot. However; it is doing a good amount of business and contributing to the programs self sustainability. Recently, I took a tour of the newly acquired building the shop is now housed in; it is full of furniture waiting to be restored. Once a full proof ventilation system is in place apprentices will be assigned to the project and more work can be done.

Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.

One challenge faced in the month of October was to create an environment where members felt safe to express grievances, difficult issues, discrepancies they have with each or with the organization.

What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?

A weekly meeting is held for members only. The meeting is supervised by a Boaz & Ruth in house counselor. During the meeting they are encouraged to practice skills learned from morning classes held at Boaz & Ruth. Skills such as: problem solving, how to be assertive, being pro-active and communication techniques.

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's Beyond Dialog series started its second session in the month of October, 2007. Beyond Dialog is a workshop series set up for the purpose of bringing about racial reconciliation.

A movie is shown that will stimulate feelings many people in our society are uncomfortable with discussing. Fear of how we may be perceived or will we be rejected are just two reasons that keep us from communicating. Dealing with racial issues is a sensitive matter and human beings tend to tread around such issues instead of taking them on.

The second part of this series included two churches with different racial backgrounds. (The Centenary Methodist Church) which is a White/European congregation and (The Asbury United Methodist Church) which is a Black/African American congregation. The congregations of each church came together with a desire to intentionally cross racial barriers and forge intentional relationships. Every individual participating in Beyond Dialog has a desire to experience healthy, wholesome relationships with people they would otherwise never come in contact with. All it takes is one participant to open up the floor with dialog sharing something of a personal nature. Incidents in their lives, circumstances, occurrences that they are/were ashamed of, thought they would be rejected because of are expressed. Once dialog begins inhibitions start to dissolve, emotions run high and are shared freely, barriers are crossed, trust is established and bonding takes place that goes beyond dialog.

Now that is something that does not take place every day. In fact it is a SPECIAL EVENT.

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.

Larry Riddick began his relationship with Boaz & Ruth as an AmeriCorps member in September, 2007. After coming home from prison last year Larry moved in with his sister who told him about the good things going on at the Boaz & Ruth program. In March Larry made contact with Boaz & Ruth seeking to become a member; however, there was no position available at the time. Larry was excited about what he seen happening at the program and stated "Boaz & Ruth became a part of my heart, a place that I wanted to (BELONG) too". Larry began attending the two hour morning classes each day and volunteered his time freely. He started working in the Diamond Café, Catering department and on the restoration project at the Old Historic Fire Station. Needless to say when the opportunity presented itself Larry was brought on as an AmeriCorps member.

When asked the standard four questions required by AmeriCorps for a member interview Larry responded as follows:

a. A typical day begins with the morning class, which I enjoy because I can learn something different and if I have questions we are at liberty to ask. Larry said "the Core Belief class is the one I have gotten the most out of so far". The class caused me to look at what my beliefs are based on; fact or fiction. I never really took a look at the bases for my belief system before and never would have. Through attending the Core Belief class I have been afforded the opportunity to look at the path I chose to take in life. A path that led to prison. Hopefully, I will make wholesome productive choices in the future, choices that will not lead me back to prison. Larry said he believes the only way he can correct areas of his life is to examine the bitter roots, in other words his core beliefs.

b. My most enlightening experience thus far has been the realization that I can trust and respect another man. This is something I have never conceived I would be able to do. I have received acceptance at Boaz & Ruth that has astounded me. Now that I am an ex-offender acceptance is hard to come by.

c. When I first came home from prison I did nothing except sit around the house watching

Court Television, I was a regular coach potato. Since I have been in the Boaz & Ruth / AmeriCorps program I am active, productive and have developed a positive outlook on life.

d. I would suggest the Boaz & Ruth program to anyone who is ready to make a positive change. They can join the program now while it is growing and grow with 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 11/14/07 at 04:11 PM
Lloyd/Veronica:

Excellent report - I have saved it as approved.

Thanks!
Steve

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