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Community Partnerships: Collaboration for Youth Service Learning

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Community Partnerships:Collaboration for Youth Service Learning

Parent-Business-School Forum

January 25, 1995
King Career Center

Sponsored by:

Anchorage Community Schools
AK Coalition for Community Service (ACCS)
AK Community Service Commission
Ready to Work
NEA-Alaska
Municipality of Anchorage
AK Department of Education
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AAVA
UAA School of Education
Internship Program of Alaska
Association of NonProfit Corporations
School to Work

Presenters: Terry Pickeral, Beau Bassett, Rachel Vaughn

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Alaska State Community Service Commission

Alaska AmeriCorps * USA Program Office

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Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2341
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January 25, 1995

Dear Community Members,

On behalf of the Alaska State Community Service Commission, I would like to welcome you to a series of training, forums, and workshops on Learn & Serve America programs. These programs have great potential to impact the youth and adults of our community.

We are pleased to have Terry Pickeral and Rachael Vaughn with us for the week and hope to learn from them additional ways that the people of Alaska can help to create collaborative relationships for youth service, volunteerism, educational reform, and community involvement.

The Alaska State Community Service Commission has been developing a State Pan that proposes strategies by which all generations of Alaskans in communities across the State can become more directly involved in meeting the social, educational, environmental, and public safety needs unique to their own areas. By building community support with parents, schools, youth, agencies, and schools, our youth in Alaska can become increasingly better citizens who are actively improving life in our communities while also preparing themselves for future careers.

Thank you for attending this session on the National and Community Service Act. We are confident that the good things which come through this session will help us to continue to build successful community service opportunities.

Best Regards,

Donna M. Chaikoff, Chair
Alaska State Community Service Commission

WASHINGTON STATE CAMPUS COMPACT

SERVICE-LEARNING

Definition:

- a method under which students learn and develop through:
  - active participation *in*
  - thoughtfully organized service experiences *that*
  - meet actual community needs *and are*
  - coordinated in collaboration *with school and community*
  - integrated into academic curriculum
  - provides structured time for reflection *(for a student to think, talk and/or write about what they did and saw during service)*
  - provides students opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real life situations in own community
  - enhances what is taught in schools by extending learning beyond the classroom
  - helps foster the development of a sense of caring of others.

Corporation on National and Community Service, 1993.

EIGHT ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

1. Meet actual community needs

2. Coordinated in collaboration w/school and community

3. Integrated into youth's academic curriculum

4. Provide structured time for a young person to think, talk, and write about what he/she did and saw during actual service activity

5. Provide young people with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real life situations in their own communities

6. Enhance what is taught in the school by extending student learning beyond the classroom

7. Help to foster the development of a sense of caring for others

8. Encourages ethic of citizenship and social action

FOUR AREAS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT POSITIVELY EFFECTED BY SERVICE-LEARNING

1. Personal Development
   - Ego Development
   - Self-Concept
   - Maturity
   - Relations With Others
   - Personality Characteristics

   service-learning experiences appear to foster maturity self-respect, and social competence

2. Career Development
   - Career Interests
   - Career Maturity

   more realistic expectations of world of work and knowledge of specific jobs/careers

3. Affective Development
   - Moral Development
   - Attitudes Toward Others
   - Attitudes Toward School and Learning

   service-learning experiences likely raise moral issues with which students must cope - objective and subjective measures indicate that students are more interested in school and more motivated to learn

4. Academic Achievement
   - Grade Point Average
   - Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills
   - Critical Thinking Appraisal

   participation in service-learning is not detrimental to academic achievement - experiences give meaning to life -

NOTE: *students who had positive interactions with adults were more positive in their interactions with other adults - expectation states theory -*

RATIONALES FOR SERVICE LEARNING

- Connect Theory and Practice
  - •puts concepts into concrete form (ground ideas)
  - •provides a context for understanding abstract matter
  - •opportunity to test and refine theories
  - •opportunity to induce new theories

- Integration of Learning
  - •presents challenges requiring more than one set of skills or knowledge
  - •provides diverse contexts for linking "real" world with academy
  - •opportunity for study in depth (immersion)
  - •connects varieties/compartments of knowledge

- Use of Knowledge
  - •historical understanding/appreciation
  - •social, economic and environmental implications
  - •moral and ethical implications
  - •communication and interpersonal skills
  - •literacy: writing, reading, speaking, listening
  - •technical skills

- Learn how to Learn
  - •collect and evaluate data
  - •relate seemingly unrelated matters and ideas
  - •self-directed learning, inquiry, logical thinking, relate ideas and experience
  - •transfer learning from one context to another
  - •reflect on, conceptualize, and apply experience-based knowledge

- Diversity and Pluralism
  - •empathy with, understanding of, and appreciation for those different from you
  - •opportunity for international and multicultural experience
  - •develop cross-cultural interaction skills

- Service Ethic/Civic Literacy
  - •empowerment in the face of social problems
  - •experience, understand and appreciate traditions of volunteerism
  - •consider and experience democratic citizenship responsibilities

Principles of Best Practice

◆ Service and youth development are the central mission of a youth service program.

◆ Young people are viewed as a vital resource which can help meet pressing human and environmental needs in communities across the nation.

◆ Appropriate incentives and rewards—such as public recognition, school and college credits, scholarships, stipends or salaries—are utilized to encourage the participation of young people and to emphasize the value our society places upon the ethic of service.

◆ Community service is recognized as a powerful form of citizenship education that imbues young people with an ethic of social responsibility carried into adulthood.

◆ A plan for meeting the developmental needs of young participants—for self-esteem, education and basic skills, employability, leadership and a sense of caring for others—is integrated into the delivery of service, along with a reflective component about the service experience.

◆ Programs and projects respond to local needs, are best planned and administered at the state and local levels, and are an integral part of community and school policy affecting youth, human services and the environment.

◆ Projects and programs are carefully structured and require certain minimum hours of service for a sustained period. Young people are organized into well-planned and well-supervised groups.

◆ Communities and participating young people view service projects as needed by and of real value to the community.

◆ Programs inculcate a sense of community responsibility and the values of citizenship. Young people are involved in appropriate ways in program design and direction.

◆ Program design provides for adequate training of participants and the staff of community agencies and organizations in which the participants will serve. Rigorous program evaluation is taken seriously.

These principles are built upon the premise that community service is a vital tradition. Faithful adherence to them in designing and implementing programs should enhance the likelihood of community service becoming an expected part of growing up for all young people.

ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSING THESE PRINCIPLES

Association of Experiential Education • American Association for Higher Education • ACCESS: Networking in the Public Interest • American Association of Community and Junior Colleges • Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America • Campus Compact • Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) • Catholic Charities USA • Child Welfare League of America • Children's Defense Fund • City Volunteer Corps • City Year • Constitutional Rights Foundation • Council of Chief State School Officers • Council of Great City Schools • Education Commission of the States • Generations Together/ Youth in Service to Elders (Univ. of Pittsburgh) • Georgetown University Volunteer and Public Service Center • Girl Scouts of the USA • Institute for Educational Leadership • International Christian Youth Exchange • Maryland Student Service Alliance • Michigan State University • National Alliance of Businesss • National Association for the Advancement of Colored People • National Association of Community Action Agencies • National Association of Partners in Education • National Association of Service and Conservation Corps • National Association of Secondary School Principals • National Association of Student YMCA's • National Association of Teen Institutes • National Collaboration for Youth • National Community Education Association • National Council for the Social Studies • National Crime Prevention Council • National Youth Leadership Council • Office of the County Superintendent of Schools (Santa Barbara, CA) • People for the American Way • PennSERVE • Public/Private Ventures • 70001 Training & Employment Institute • Thomas Jefferson Forum • United States Basic Skills Investment Corp. • William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Youth and America's Future • Youth Service America • Youth Service Charleston • Youth Service New Jersey

SERVICE-LEARNING: AN OPPORTUNITY TO GO BEYOND BAND-AIDS

Catalina Boggio

I recently spoke with one of my friends, Marta, who, while in school in California, had a service-learning opportunity to help feed the homeless. Marta spoke passionately of bringing groceries to hungry children, and of being able to use her bilingual abilities to communicate with Mexican families. Her service-learning experience had afforded her the opportunity to become familiar with many of the intricacies that surround the plight of the homeless. However, Marta also related that she soon became frustrated with her work because she realized she could "do this forever and it would never give these people homes and the ability to feed themselves." Marta's service-learning had taught her much about hunger and homelessness, but it had not given her a way to work for long-term solutions to the problem.

Marta is not alone in the experience she describes. Hundreds of people providing service go through the same emotions and realizations. Providing service can be a wonderfully fulfilling and educational experience, but if service work isn't combined with addressing the root causes of problems, it will more than likely be lacking in long-term effectiveness. Service-learning must therefore teach two lessons: how to address the immediate needs of our society; and how to create and implement long-term solutions to the problems that cause those immediate needs.

Marta's work with the homeless inspired her to address the causes that lie at the core of homelessness. She is now working at an economic community development center, trying to break down the barriers that keep struggling families from attaining affordable housing. Through the center she advocates for the homeless, promoting housing projects that would provide low-rent apartments for the poor. Increasing the amount of sustainable housing is one way of combating the root causes of homelessness. In addition to meeting immediate needs, Marta is also working to find long-term solutions to the problem.

Like Marta, Henry is a young person who has benefitted from service-learning. His particular focus is environmental racism — the dumping of waste in poor or minority communities. Henry has gone into these communities and learned through his cleanup efforts there. He recognizes the value of cleanups, but he also realizes that he "could go out to RFK [an area where extensive environmental racism occurs] and clean up every week, and it would still be a band-aid approach." While cleaning up waste after it has been dumped is necessary and a valuable experience in itself, a more effective service-learning opportunity would combine environmental cleanup with exploring ways to prevent the dumping from occurring altogether.

Henry is currently working with an organization that travels to various universities, teaching advocacy skills to young environmentalists so they can work to solve the root causes of environmental problems. By teaching students how to examine causation, Henry is ensuring that their work will not be limited to service, but will go beyond that to find more lasting resolutions to environmental problems.

Through service-learning, both Henry and Marta have gained helpful knowledge on alleviating community needs. While the experiences were valuable, they both realized that these service-learning experiences, no matter how beneficial, were still only short-term answers to more complicated

dilemmas. The service-learning activities would have been much more effective had they included opportunities to explore long-range solutions for the larger social problems.

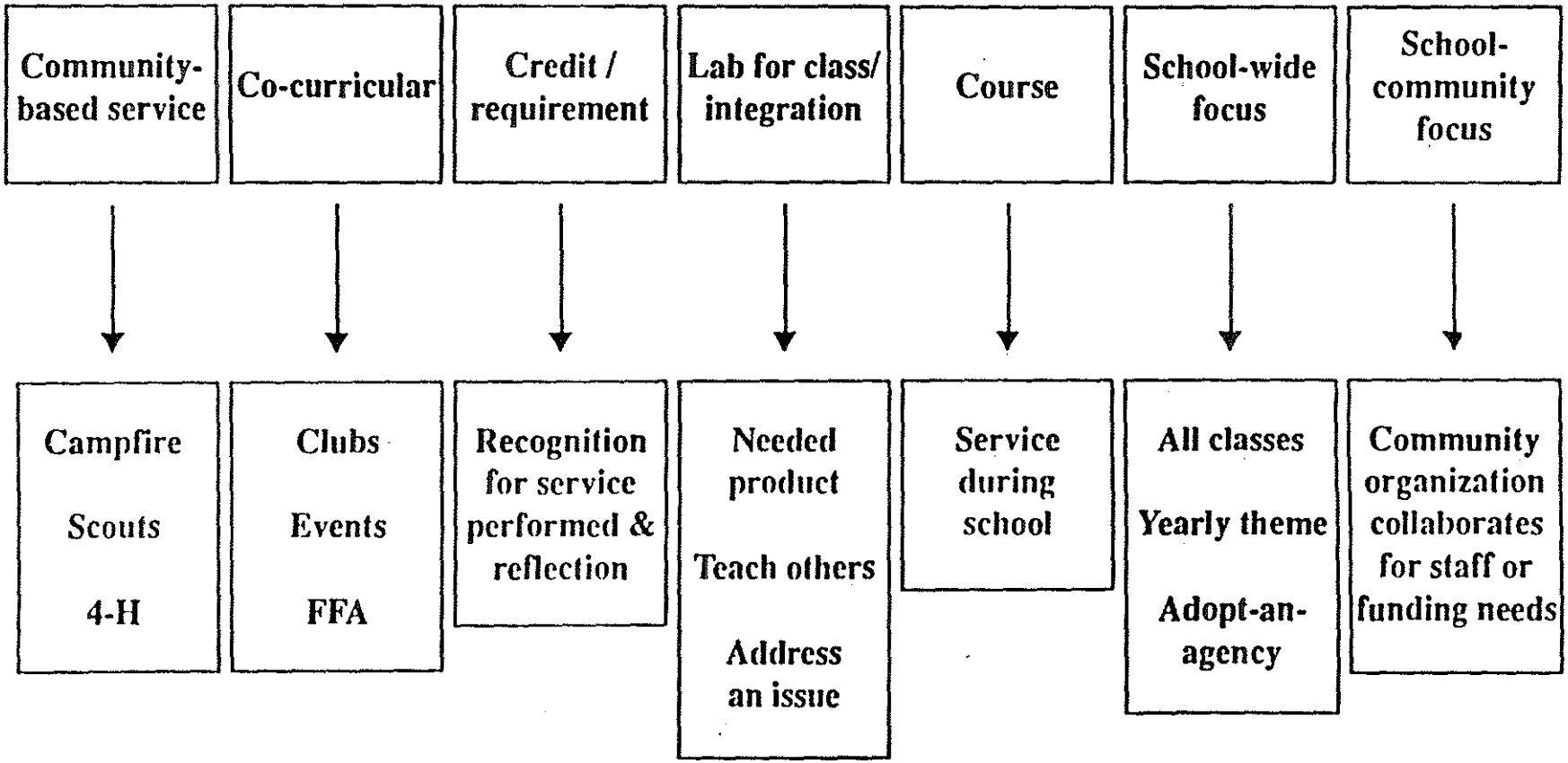
I myself have had service-learning experiences similar to Marta's and Henry's. While attending college in North Carolina, I had the opportunity to volunteer at a shelter for battered women. I gained extensive knowledge about the issues involved in wife-battering. However, I soon began to realize that my work focused entirely on treatment, without any attention to prevention. By spending all my time attending to the immediate needs of battered women, I had ignored the greater social and legal factors that allow battering to occur in the first place. I began to actively search for solutions to the root causes of battering. This is not an easy task, nor does it grant the immediate gratification that more traditional service opportunities present. What it does provide, however, is the opportunity to seek out a more long-term solution that addresses the causal factors of the problem, rather than a quick-fix approach that tends to treat only the symptoms of the disease.

I am currently working at the Advocacy Institute (AI), which teaches citizens methods for addressing the root causes of social problems. AI has worked with community agencies, policymakers, young people, and a variety of other groups to promote and provide the strategies needed to assess and attack the sources of social problems. Through these efforts, we have provided hundreds of people with the skills necessary to bring about effective social change. These lessons have facilitated service-learning that goes beyond Band-Aids to focus on uncovering the core factors of many of today's most pressing problems.

Service-learning in education reform has the potential to develop and train future leaders to create significant social change. The best way to ensure that this potential is realized is to design service-learning experiences that combine short-term service activities with the search for more lasting, long-term solutions. If service learning focuses only on service and short-term solutions, then it won't teach our future leaders to solve the nation's problems.

Catalina M. Bioggio is a program associate for the Leadership Development Program at the Advocacy Institute (AI) in Washington, DC. A recent graduate of Duke University, Ms. Boggio is working at AI through the DC Public Allies Apprenticeship Program.

WAYS TO INFUSE SERVICE



Community Organizations As Family

Endeavors That Engage and Support Adolescents

What kinds of out-of-school activities constructively engage adolescents? What kinds of programs effectively address their developmental needs as they move from childhood to adulthood in high-risk environments? The authors provide some answers to these and other questions.

BY SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH AND MILBREY WALLIN McLAUGHLIN

BRUCE, a.k.a. Superman, squints in concentration, measuring the distance to the trampolette placed in front of the tumbling mats. Nineteen of his red-and-white-clad teammates position themselves in a tight row, forming a human bridge and a challenge to Bruce's strength and tumbling skills. Nicknamed for another man of flight, Bruce is the finale for the night's show. He takes a deep breath, sprints down the gym floor, springs from the trampolette, and flies over the backs of his teammates. He lands with arms raised, gold chains glinting, and a smile that lights the room.

* * *

"Come on, Eric. What are you waiting on? What you waiting on? C'mon, c'mon. Move it. Move it. Give it up. Right there. There you go. There you go."

These shouts from Coach Beam echo against the empty stands of the gymnasium where the local YMCA boys' basketball team is practicing for a game against their arch rivals from the next town. The YMCA is located in a neighborhood of project housing that is being torn down to make room for a new freeway. The boys on the court, known as "Beam's boys," are 12- to 14-year-old African-Americans who spend an average of 15 hours a week at practice and doing homework under the watchful eye of the coach.

* * *

The director of a local youth organization tells a visiting political leader: "You should know about Darlene -- and, oh yes, her brother, Tyrone, too. But we call him Toot around here. Mother died of AIDS six months ago. Father left them and two younger girls. Darlene brings the younger ones to the Girls Club at 7 each morning, and we send them off to school and then keep them occupied while she's at work after school. Toot works all day and picks the girls up at 7 each night, after he leaves the Boys Club, where he boxes. He feeds the girls and gets them to bed before Darlene gets home. Each day it's the same."

* * *

These three vignettes are drawn from our ongoing research.[1] They depict adolescents' lively and voluntary involvement in constructive, positive alternatives to the counterproductive teenage ventures that fill the morning newspapers, most particularly drug-related activities and gang violence.

Bruce is a young African-American, born and reared in one of the nation's toughest housing projects; he navigates through a neighborhood known nationally for violence and gang dominance. His "gang" is a tumbling team. Eric and the other basketball players hang out at the Y in their spare time to keep out of harm's way -- off the streets. They have found a protected niche of developmentally appropriate, adult-monitored activities. For Darlene and Toot, the neighborhood organizations are not just places to spend pleasant times with their peers, but institutions that support them in their early assumptions of responsibility.

Unlike Toot, Darlene is still in school, although her family responsibilities may soon force her to quit and take a full-time job. Both youths essentially left school several years ago; piles of cuts and tardies

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■ The integration of members into the life of the group depends on differentiation within the group: varied activities, varied rhythms of work and play, and the valuing of differing talents, ages, and approaches.

planted them firmly in school administrators' minds as early dropouts. For several years, they have served as caregivers and heads of their household. For all the teenagers described above, nonschool organizations provide multiple services that sustain them in their family roles and give them broad support for their identities as teenagers.

Policy makers and practitioners concerned with American youth acknowledge the special and critical contribution of community organizations as resources that extend beyond family and schools. Their view recognizes the limitations of today's schools and families. Schools as social institutions are inadequate because they are built on outmoded assumptions about family and community. Too many families simply lack the emotional, financial, experiential, or cognitive supports that a developing youngster requires.[2] Policy makers and practitioners no longer need to be convinced of the importance of positive local alternatives to a family- and school-based system of support.

Most adolescents, however, are not involved in any community based activities on a regular basis. For some young people, especially those growing up in stressed inner-city or rural communities, this lack of participation reflects lack of opportunity; there simply are few organizations or undertakings available to them. As a school superintendent in a large eastern city grumbled, the only "youth-serving" agents in the city are the police. A city official in another urban area said that his community's youth policy was "parks and police" – parks to provide a place for youths to gather outside their neighborhoods and police to monitor their behavior once gathered there.

But lack of opportunity is not the whole (or even the most important) reason why young people generally are not involved in organized, constructive activities during out-of-school hours. Effective strategies for enabling such local organizations to attract youths are not well-understood and are the exceptions rather than the rule. Practitioners from diverse youth-serving organizations – churches, sports organizations, youth clubs, schools, social clubs – say that a major problem they confront is *attracting and sustaining the involvement of young people*, especially teenagers. Well-equipped gymnasiums in the inner city too often sit empty, computer labs that are the fruits of prodigious fund-raising efforts serve a hand-

Photo by [illegible]

ful rather than a roomful of students after school; pony leagues fold for lack of players; church workers give up on planning social activities for youngsters past the age of 12.

What kinds of activities constructively engage adolescents? What kinds of programs effectively address the developmental needs of youngsters as they move from childhood to adulthood in high-risk environments? What kinds of youth-serving organizations do adolescents choose to join? We have waited in many empty gyms for the students to come by for after-school theater class; we have made small talk with adult sponsors of tutoring centers as the hoped-for clients failed to materialize. But we have also observed adolescents cheerfully and fully engaged in activities located in their communities, activities that keep them off the streets and provide them with the tutoring help needed to keep them in school. These organizations, through their form and flexibility in activities, have fortified these youths during their difficult adolescent years.

WHAT MAKES the enterprises that succeed different from those that fail to attract and hold the interest of teenagers? Activities and sponsoring organizations such as those in our opening vignettes are not of a single type. What they have in common is their diversity and their insistence that members feel that they belong to an intimate group. The integration of members into the life of the group depends on differentiation within the group: varied activities, varied rhythms of work and play, and the valuing of differing talents, ages, and approaches.

Successful organizations adopt an approach that is both firm and flexible; they empower rather than infantilize youths; they are clear about their goals and their rules of membership. Dance troupes, basketball teams, tumbling groups, and theater groups boom and buzz with the energy of adolescents. The focus of any local youth organization that effectively serves youths in the 1990s has less to do with what it is than with how it is defined and operated.

Not surprisingly, these out-of-school settings — whether they be grassroots youth organizations, local chapters of national groups (such as Boys Clubs, Future Farmers of America, and so on), local religious organizations, or parks and recreation centers — share many of the features that in earlier eras characterized family life.

These organizations provide a strong sense of membership with numerous marks of identification. Their approach to youths is highly personalized. In one of Tyrone's early visits to the Boys Club, he became "Toot" when he picked up a saxophone left lying around by one of the older boys. The sound he made as he attempted to play the instrument won him a nickname that stuck, even when he became one of the club's best boxers and an instructor for the younger boys, who insisted on calling him "Tootie." For Toot and others like him, the Boys Club is a fortress against the outside world. Within the walls of the club, he can be teased, called by a silly diminutive, teach younger boys, horse around with friends who also like to box, and enter, if only briefly, the stable life of an ordinary teenager.

The club offers a range of activities that are developmentally appropriate for all the boys who come there; some work in the art room, others in sculpture, others on dramatic productions that they write, direct, and produce. Still others make up the swim team and the boxing club, and all have access to the study room, where older members help the younger ones with homework, and adults — volunteer and paid — are also available to provide assistance. The "something for everyone" menu of activities includes youngsters from ages 9 to 19 in a range of designated events and spaces. More important, the norm at the club is that everyone helps out to keep the place going. Nonswimmers count laps for the 500-yard freestyle, and nonactors clear the mats from the gym floor in preparation for a play rehearsal.

Successful organizations adopt an approach that is both firm and flexible; they empower rather than infantilize youths.

Out-of-school organizations to which youths like Bruce, Toot and Darlene, and Beam's boys find their way envelop teens firmly in a socializing community that holds them responsible for their own actions. In addition, the members are held accountable for the institution's well-being and for the actions of others within the protected walls of the organization. Membership brings with it acceptance of "minimal rules with maximal impact." The central rules of these organizations are simple and broad: no hanging out with gang members; no smoking dope; leave this area just like you'd want to find it; put up or shut up; don't forget you represent us — all of us — and if you blow it, you'll have all of us to answer to; and no "doing the dozens."

Of course, within such broad rules are numerous others that have to do with appropriate language and dress, management of specific activities, and the security and cleanliness of the building. Breaking one of these minor rules brings an immediate reminder of the higher rules of membership and calls into question the individual's right to belong to the group.

The consistent and reliable adults — from directors to custodians — who operate these youth organizations not only enforce the rules for the members but also make it evident that *everyone* is equally responsible for monitoring the behavior of those who come to the organization. Rules are clear, and enforcement is certain; it is "tough love." Flexibility comes not in mitigated punishments, but in the willingness to help youths plan, reform, reshape, and assess events within the organization. Adults do not plan without their clients; any performance, special event, or extra activity requires the involvement of the young people themselves.

These features are reminiscent of the concepts of family pride, shared responsibility for maintaining a household, and the "golden rule" of communal living. Moreover, like family life, these organizations do not move from the peak of one planned "special event" to the next. Instead, their pace is seasonal and moves constantly through practice toward performances, all of which are somewhat graduated in level of importance. For example, swim meets, run-throughs of plays, play-offs to prepare for tournaments, within-group rounds of boxing competitions, and in-house judging of artworks to choose a few pieces for county or state competition are peak moments of judgment and reassessment in preparation for actual competition or performance. The final public performance of a season may begin a transitional period of "down time," during which some youths explore other activities (another sport, a different dramatic production, and so on) or try just "being around" with one another.

■ **Nonschool organizations provide multiple services that sustain youths in their familiar roles and give them broad support for their identities as teenagers.**

The push toward performance and the ongoing emphasis on collaborating in activities support the habit of talking through what is going on and how mistakes and successes happen. Interpreting events in which all have participated bonds members to one another, often through extensive teasing, special terms to refer to "bloopers," and an abundance of evidence that members do "mind each other's business." This mutual responsibility for monitoring behavior fits well with the norms of an idealized family or communal support group. The members "look out for each other." Newcomers and younger members often "belong" for a while to those who have been around longer or are older.

In out-of-school organizations that successfully attract youngsters, adults and youngsters alike talk about the need for the institution to value differences. Newcomers are scouted for their talents: "Can you play center?" "You ever been in a play before?" "You know anything about us? Why'd you come here?" Members of these organizations make it clear that they value differences – among themselves, in their activities, and in strategies and approaches. Such valuing of differences does not, however, extend to radical extremes; to do so would be to break the central rules of the organization that ensure its survival. Thus the mission of the organization and its teams must be the clear focus driving any member's radical ideas for changing things.

Youth-serving organizations that successfully attract young people invariably have some links to education – but rarely to schools. Many include homework sessions and tutoring opportunities, and all let members talk openly about problems and successes in school. The ethos of these organizations encourages members to stay in school, keep up attendance, and try harder with schoolwork. Many provide youths with "natural learning activities" that call for skills that are also presumably useful in school (e.g., keeping the books for a dance ensemble, reading plays to get ideas for creative skits, studying old playbills to learn how to prepare a program for a production). Often, helping teens stay in school requires the assistance and support of organizations that are as little like their neighborhood schools as possible.

THESE family-like organizations and activities differ in at least six crucial elements of design and orientation from those youth-serving institutions that are less successful in attracting and engaging adolescents.

1. These organizations share a common conception of young people as resources to be developed, rather than as problems to be managed. This conception of young people generates program activities that respect the views and abilities youths bring with them, that are attuned to their developmental needs and cul-

Photo by David Grossman/Courtesy of Project Basement, New York Foundling Hospital

tural differences, and that strive to provide support that meshes with their unmet needs. Activities consistent with this conception of youths embrace the whole person – not just single issues, such as pregnancy, substance abuse, or school success. While a single focus, such as basketball or tumbling, may define the organization, it also embraces the full emotional, social, educational, and economic needs of participating adolescents.

2. Activities that young people elect to join most often yield a recognizable "product" – a performance, a team record, a newspaper, an edited volume. Adolescent youths living in stressed urban environments generally spurn the purely "recreational" activities that middle-class parents assume their teenagers want. These adolescents are product-oriented. They want to create something that signals accomplishment. Contrary to the assumptions of many program planners, youths (especially those from at-risk environments) seem to recognize that they cannot really afford to spend much time and energy on "just plain fun." It has to amount to something.

3. Activities driven by a conception of youths as resources to be developed also invest a significant measure of responsibility for that development in the young people themselves. Entrusting important activities to them plays a critical role in the development of young people from an early age. The successful activities we have observed suggest that ownership and trust are essential for adolescents. A program attractive to teenagers is a program that is "theirs," not an activity organized and planned in a way that reminds them of a controlling parent or stern teacher. What's "good stuff" from the perspective of an adult, teenagers tell us clearly, is not always good – or even appropriate – stuff in their view.

4. Neighborhood investment is also important. For example, the director of a neighborhood Boys Club tells of the debilitating decline in the number of community volunteers and board members when the club's financial authority was centralized "downtown" and local residents no longer had a sense that the money they raised went to *their* club. Youth-serving organizations that are vital and effective from the community's perspective have their roots deep in the community, and they can draw on the local environment for political, financial, and instrumental support. Thus the local organization is not a stranger; it is a recognized and legitimate member of the community family because the community members have helped to develop, shape, and reform the programs that "fit" the community's youths.

5. Community organizations that attract youngsters are responsive to the "local ecology," the untapped resources and unmet needs of those who become their members. Generic program models or standardized service menus, especially those created at some remove, risk being redundant or irrelevant. Not all neighborhoods have the same configuration of schools, recreational activities, social services, family coherence, political clout, or cultural opportunities. Not all youth programs need to offer the same sports, education, social supports, or training. Efforts that have effectively engaged and sustained the participation of young people define their emphases and offerings in terms of the communities they serve.

6. As youth-serving organizations listen to and respond to community needs, they must also change to meet shifts in the ecology of the neighborhood. As neighborhoods move up or down the socioeconomic ladder, as their ethnic makeup shifts, and as other youth-serving institutions (such as schools) are perceived as responding or not responding to the needs of local youngsters, community organizations must move quickly to realign their activities, hours, administrative style, and sources of financial support to the new realities of the community. Community organizations that serve youths must simultaneously understand and change themselves. Thus effective youth-serving organizations are not often found in the "organizational yellow pages," either because they escape the notice of official institutional census takers or because the form, identification, and even location of the organization change as the group responds to local circumstances.

■ The features of community youth-serving organizations outlined here are examples of theory put into practice.

In the current enthusiasm for looking at learning as situated or socially constructed knowledge,[3] the features of community youth-serving organizations outlined here are examples of theory put into practice. The resources of each organization include the collective memory of the group's members, as well as the dynamics of current social relationships and seasonal activities that provide a full cycle to fulfillment through the completion of an individual task or performance or of a seasonal activity (e.g., basketball). The activities of these organizations, like the idealized family life whose features they reflect, structure fields for action, reflection, and constructive social interaction.

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1. With the support of the Spencer Foundation, we are involved in a multi-year research project that examines the resources and programs available to youths, especially adolescents, in diverse urban settings. In identifying the organizations that young people find supportive and relevant, we depended on community informants – youths and adults – rather than on official organizational lists or rosters. Consequently, we observed youths participating in a broad variety of activities and supported by diverse sponsors – the spectrum included everything from small endeavors created and sustained by the energy of a single individual to neighborhood "branches" of national organizations.

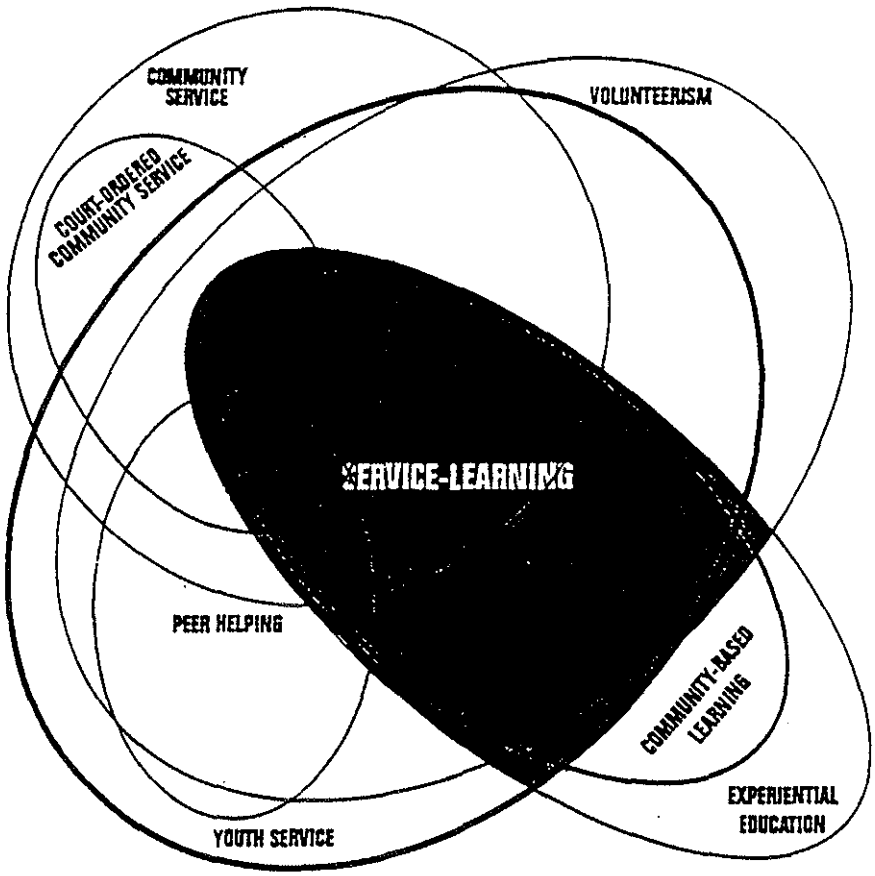
2. We develop this point in more detail in Shirley Brice Heath and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, "A Child Resource Policy: Moving Beyond Dependence on School and Family," *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 1987, pp. 576-80.

3. See, for example, Jean Lave, *Cognition in Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Lauren B. Resnick, "Learning in School and Out," *Educational Researcher*, December 1987, pp. 13-20; and James G. Greeno, "Understanding Procedural Knowledge in Mathematics Instruction," *Educational Psychologist*, vol. 12, 1978, pp. 262-83. K

The Relationship Between Two Educational Reforms

School To Work	&	Service Learning
A type of school reform		A type of school reform
Jobs		Structured tasks, projects
Meeting Real Employer Needs		Meeting Real Community Needs
Connects academic & Real World		Connects academic & Real World
Partnerships w/businesses		Partnerships w/ agencies, non-profits
Students as employees in training		Students as performers of service
Study at school linked to work performance at on & off campus job		Study at school linked to performance of tasks on & off campus in community
Authentic assessment		Authentic assessment
Employability/skill aquisition		Employability/skill acquisition
Supervision by employer		Supervision by agency person-university student/other adult
Critical thinking, problem solving		Critical thinking, problem solving
Increased student motivation based upon student interest/success		Increased student motivation based upon student interest/success
Develops Work ethic & readiness		Develops work ethic & readiness
		Citizenship, service to others
		Reflection
Competence building		Competence building
Confidence building		Confidence building
Structure/hours/contracts/credit		Structure/hours/contracts/credit
Choice/student initiated		Choice/student initiated
Goal: Prepare students for workplace, career path		Goal: Prepare students for workplace career path, citizenship

Prepared by: Robert Beau Bassett 12/21/94



VOLUNTEERISM	At its core, volunteerism refers to people who perform some service or good work of their own free will and without pay.
SERVICE-LEARNING	Youth are involved in helping others, but a particular emphasis is placed on the learning that occurs through the service. Students sometimes get academic credit for their participation.
YOUTH SERVICE	This is umbrella title for all the specialized approaches to using youth as resources in the community.
COMMUNITY SERVICE	Strictly defined, this is volunteer work in the community. It is also the term used for court-ordered or alternative sentencing programs.
PEER HELPING	Youth help other youth or younger children, including tutoring, conflict mediation, peer counseling, etc.

PURPOSE OF LEARN & SERVE AMERICA

" Learn and Serve America is a Program for school-age youth administered by the Corporation for National Service and created by the National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993. "

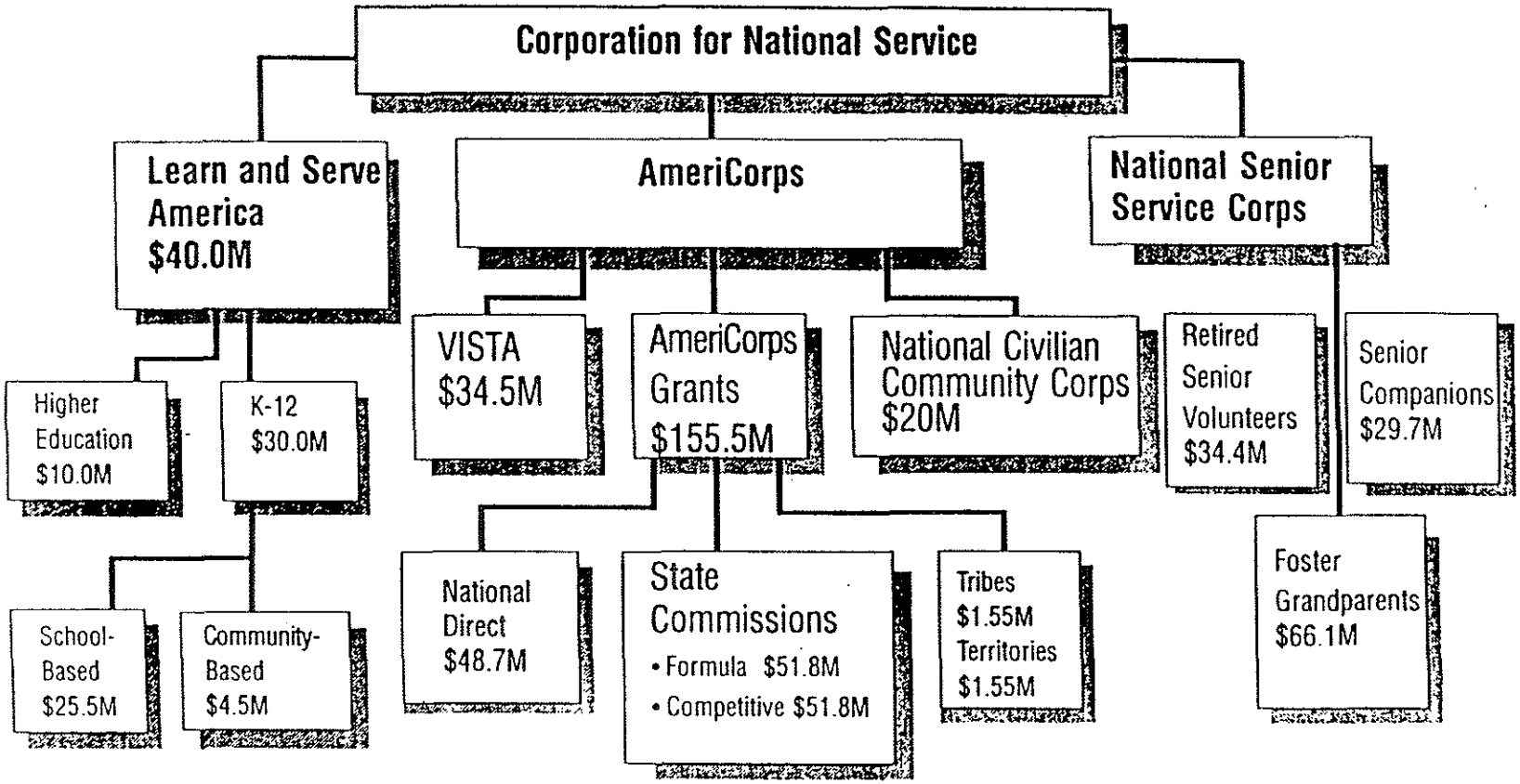
" Service Learning is a method which engages young people in service to their communities as a means to enrich their academic learning, promote personal growth, and help them develop the skills needed for productive citizenship ".

The Corporation funds programs that:

- encourage community-based agencies and elementary and secondary school teachers to create, develop, and offer service-learning opportunities for all school-age youth;
- educate teachers about service-learning and incorporate service-learning opportunities into classrooms to enhance academic learning
- coordinate the work of adult volunteers
- introduce young people to various careers and encourage them to pursue further education and training; and
- hire service-learning coordinatrors to assist with identifying community partners and forging partnerships, implementing school-based service-learning programs, providing technical assistance and information to facilitate the training of teachers who want to use service-learning in their classrooms, and assisting local partnerships in the planning, development, and execution of service-learning projects. Service-learning coordinators may also be attained through the Americorps USA program under a separate grant competition.

*** From 1995 Learn & Serve America Request for Proposals

PROGRAMS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE*



*These amounts represent approximate funds available for program grants in FY'94. They do not include Corporation and State Commission administrative costs, AmeriCorps challenge, disability, and disaster relief grants, or training and technical asssistance.

FRAMEWORK OF SERVICE DEVELOPMENT TODAY

Robert C. Bassett 12/21/94

I. National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993, Federal Law

- Created: **Corporation for National & Community Service**, A Federal Agency

Mission: To engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. This service will address the nation's educational, public safety, human and environmental needs in order to achieve direct and demonstrable results. In fulfilling its mission, the Corporation will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people and provide educational opportunity for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

- **Which funds:**

A. LEARN & SERVE AMERICA PROGRAMS

- Δ K-12 school based programs
- Δ Higher Education programs
- Δ Community based organizations/agencies

Serving learning is an educational method by which students learn and develop through active participation in service that:

1) is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
2) is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program and with the community;
3) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum and
4) includes structured time for the students and participants to reflect on the service experience.

B. NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

- Δ Americorps 17-older adults , 9 months to 2 years
- Δ VISTA 18 -older adults, 1-2 years
- Δ Senior Volunteer Programs 55 and older adults
- Δ National Community Conservation Corps 18-24 year olds

National service refers to a full-time service experience. Stipends are associated with national service. Participants are primarily out-of-school adults and the service is usually six months to a maximum of four years.

- Required formation of: **Alaska State Community Service Commission;** Hickel Administration placed in Alaska Department of Community & Regional Affa and designated Lead Agency

- **Commission is appointed by Governor** to promote & develop service opportunities, create a statewide stategic plan, provide for technical assistance, oversee & assist service programs, apply for Federal funds, raise other funds;

- To **Work closely** with Department of Education & other State Departments;

- To **Complement** other Reforms Efforts: ie. Alaska 2000, School To Work Transition/ Cooperative Education/Ready To Work/Job Training/Community Work Service

- Has **Impacts On** :

  - Δ State, Federal & Local Government Agencies
  - Δ Alaska State Board of Education
  - Δ Local School Districts
  - Δ Community Education/Curriculum/Other Programs
  - Δ Individual Schools & Atlternative programs for At Risk students
  - Δ High Schools: student gov't, clubs, U.S. gov't,courses, Polar K-12
  - Δ Jr. High/Middle: service projects, suspension alternative
  - Δ Elementary Schools: service projects
  - Δ Municipalities; youth policies, programs, organizations;
  - Δ Local Community Agencies

- **Promotes partnerships with** local, statewide agencies:Local government agencies, United Way, Alaska Community Share, Association of Volunteer Administration, Public Agencies, Businesses, National Guard, etc.;

- **Currently:** Alaska is receiving approximately $ 1.5 million for Learn & Serve America and Americorps programs in Sitka Community Schools, EPA, RurAl Cap, U.S. Forest Service, SAGA, National Guard Youth Corps;

- **Creating Effective Service Learning Programs which require:**

  - Δ **Preparation of students** timing, student initiative, reflection
  - Δ **Teacher orientation & training** re needs of students,agencies
  - Δ **Organization** within school structure, classes, time, school leadership
  - Δ **Integration** into Curriculum and Across Grades
  - Δ **Coordination** and communication with agencies- agreements
  - Δ **Assessment** of experiences for students & agencies
  - Δ **Quality Partnerships** striving for continuous improvement

- **Alaska has several grant proposal deadlines** for Learn & Serve America and Americorps programs coming up at the end of February and into March, April, ans May. The Alaska State Community Service Commission Application is due to the National Corporation in May;

- **There is a need for prudent, coordinated, and timely action;**

Alaska State National and Community Service Strategy Plan

VISION:

Alaska will work together to build upon its traditional + cultural values and strengths of community, responsibility, and respect for the individual, our families, children and elders; by working together for creative improvement in community service.

Alaska will work together to provide meaningful opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together and be involved in meeting critical community needs and revitalizing the community service ethic.

Alaska will work together to inspire, promote, and support Alaska's national and community service programs and other volunteer activities at the local, regional and statewide levels - which:

Assure the optimal opportunity for the individual to participate and be involved in providing and receiving benefit from community human need, education, public safety and environmental services; and promote and be sensitive of the value in communities identifying and prioritizing their own needs;

Assure provision of equitable rural and urban allocation of Alaska's National and Community Service resources to assist with locally identified needs and priorities, and which are addressed through locally conceived and driven strategies; promote activities which strengthen ties between Alaska's villages, cities, and neighborhoods and their service organizations;

Promote activities which bring together individuals, communities, agencies, institutions and businesses to cooperate and be involved in developing plans, policies and programs which provide lasting and constructive change, and which result in improvement of community services;

Promote and facilitate collaborative efforts and coordination between agencies and programs; improve and expand communication among key state and regional programs / services that address community service needs; collect and disseminate information via a statewide community-service "computer network" bulletin board; utilizing improved communications and computer networks to provide technical assistance to service providers and consumers;

Promote incorporation of service learning into the public school's curriculum; support and reinforce existing efforts towards service learning; promote efforts to expand and energize community service opportunities which generate educational structures where every young, adult, an elder person in Alaska is challenged to serve; and which address issues of illiteracy, higher education, teacher training and cultural diversity and sensitivity;

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

On September 21,1993, the President signed into law the National and Community Service Trust Act- (The Act), which created the Corporation for National and Community Service (The Corporation). The Corporation's mission is to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community based service. This service will address the nation's educational, public safety, human, and environmental needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results. In doing so, the Corporation will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunity for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

The Corporation is a new Federal agency that encompasses the work and staff of two previously existing agencies: the Commission on National and Community Service and ACTION. The Corporation will fund a new national service initiative called AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps includes the National Service grant program described in this overview.

ALASKA STATE COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMISSION

In order for Alaska to be eligible for CNCS AmeriCorps funding, Governor Walter J. Hickel has appointed a bipartisan, independent Alaska State Community Service Commission. The Corporation awarded Alaska a grant of $125,000 to cover 85 percent of the cost of establishing and operating the Commission. The Alaska State Community Service Commission will beresponsible for: preselecting and Alaska's AmeriCorps programs and developing a comprehensive plan for service in Alaska. The Alaska State Application to the Corporation will include Alaska's strategic plan and the Alaska State Community Service Commission's recommendations for program funding. The first year deadline for programs to apply to the Alaska State Community Service Commission is June 12, 1994. The deadline for the Alaska Sate Commission to submit its application to the Corporation is June 22.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is about getting things done. It will engage the energy and idealism of the American people, especially young people, in meeting the most critical educational, public safety, human, and environmental needs of our communities. It will strengthen communities and the civic character of our people through service, and reward those who answer the call to service with enhanced educational opportunity. AmeriCorps will enable thousands of Americans to serve in a variety of programs on a full-time or part-time basis before, during, or after post-secondary education. They may receive a living allowance while serving, and on successful completion of a term of service, an educational award.

In building the national service system, the Corporation partnered with (*Alaska State Community Service*) Commissions of states in order to involve and support local grassroots programs that meet rigorous national standards. Through this structure, communities across the nation will channel the unique talents and creativity of Americans toward effectively addressing their most important needs.

Start date: Programs must agree to begin terms of service in September '94, January '95, or June '95 for summer programs only. Creating "classes" of participants who begin and "graduate" from their terms of service at the same time will help create a national identity. This requirement will also facilitate recruiting during academic year. Programs must fill an approved national service position (left vacant due to attrition) by no later than six weeks after the program starting date of the participant.

Identity: To help promote a national identity for all AmeriCorps programs and participants, programs will utilize AmeriCorps logos and common application materials. Programs will participate in other activities such as common opening ceremonies (including the administration of a national oath), service days, and conferences. An AmeriCorps program may continue to use its own name, logo, or other identifying materials on uniforms or other items in addition to, but not in lieu of, the AmeriCorps name and logo.

What are the goals of the AmeriCorps program?

The Alaska State Community Service Commission and the Corporation have developed AmeriCorps program requirements in order to ensure that all programs adhere to statutory provisions and meet the goals of AmeriCorps. Programs must establish a mission statement and annual objectives covering each of the following:

getting things done, strengthening community, and developing participant citizenship and skills

Of these, the Corporation considers the first goal to be the most important.

ASSIGNMENT:

Make A Difference

Community-service projects are on the rise, and for students who participate, the experience can be the most powerful of their school career

BY RENIE SCHAPIRO

Five years ago, when David Hornbeck was Maryland's commissioner of education, he tried to persuade state policymakers to require 100 hours of community service for high school graduation. The proposal was not well received.

Opponents couldn't line up fast enough to shoot it down. There would be liability problems, they insisted. And it would take time away from important academic subjects. What about transportation and finding enough placements? "The most vexing, most frustrating, most maddening reaction," says Hornbeck, "was from those who said community service is for criminals, and we don't want our children to be criminals."

Community service was the only one of several new graduation requirements under consideration that year that didn't pass. Looking back now, Hornbeck laughs about it. "It wasn't even a fit topic for polite cocktail party conversation," he says.

A few months ago, Hornbeck was again extolling the virtues of "service learning," as it is called, but this time he was addressing a crowd of 500 educators and students from about 20 states. They were attending a conference to learn how to initiate and expand community service in the schools. Hornbeck—now an attorney with the Washington, D.C., law firm of Hogan & Hartson—was the keynote speaker, and he couldn't have been received more warmly. Sharing the podium with him were representatives from the White House and Congress, who came to voice their support for youth service and to discuss pending legislation that would give it a boost.

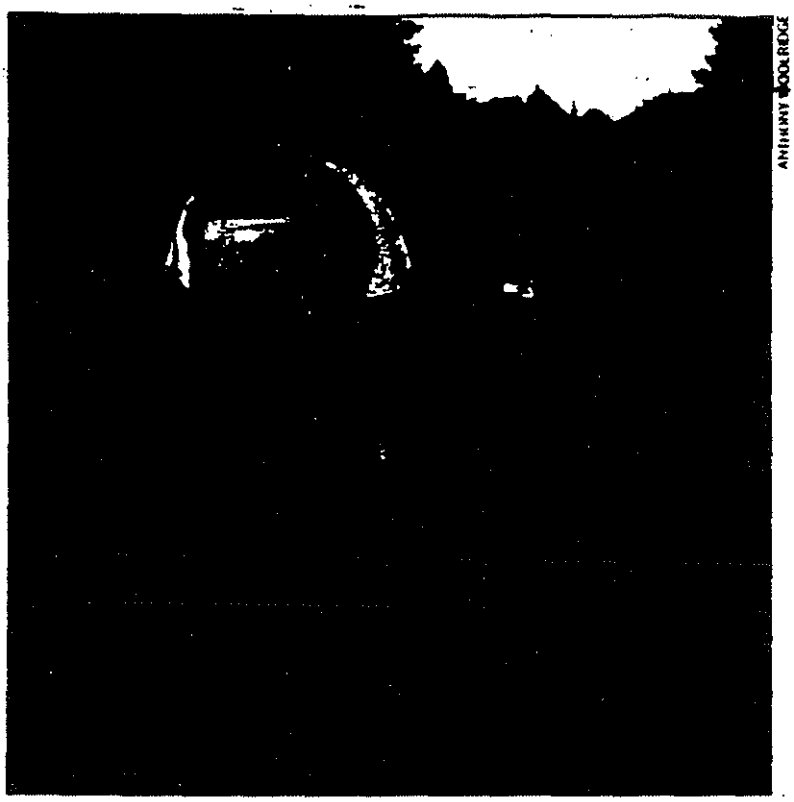
Back in Maryland, attitudes have markedly changed. More than half the schools now have some kind of program, according to Hornbeck. For the past two years, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend has been a consultant to the state, helping establish voluntary-service programs in the schools. Clearly, youth service is no longer an impolite topic of conversation. Says Townsend, "The dinner table conversation now is not only 'How is your kid doing?' but 'What is your kid doing as far as community service is concerned?' "

After a decade that has been characterized as one of avarice and self-interest, it is not surprising that the idea of community service is gaining appeal. The push is coming from a number of quarters, including the White House. President Bush recently said, "From now on, any definition of a successful life must include serving others."

Although some teachers and administrators are wary of directly involving schools in community service—fearing that it will be one more "add-on" in an already overcrowded day—those who have tried it typically are very enthusiastic. Says Dan Conrad, a social studies teacher who has required service projects for nearly 20 years: "Community service is what keeps me in education."

Community service has long been an integral part of the program at many private schools. The burgeoning movement of the past few years is to encourage—and in some instances to require—service in the public schools, as well. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade in inner-city, suburban, and rural schools are becoming involved. The programs range from the extracurricular, usually under the auspices of a service club, to the curricular, in which service is an integral part of how subjects are taught. The latter is considered the ideal by service-learning advocates.

Between these two extremes are several other common approaches. In some places, students get involved



ANTHONY BOOLREDGE

"My involvement began with Matt, a 10-year-old boy with cerebral palsy. The school he attends held a marathon and he needed a partner.

"Matt was very depressed that he had no one to walk with in the marathon because he had gotten more than $300 in pledges. His disease makes it very difficult for him to walk; six miles walked by Matt takes the same amount of energy and strength as it would take a normal person to walk 12 miles, according to his doctor.

"I received a call from Matt and he asked me to walk with him. I agreed and it turned out to be a very enjoyable day. He got tired a couple of times so I put him on my shoulders for a little way. The look in that little boy's eyes as he crossed the finish line was worth more than the $300 he had just earned in pledges.

"My involvement taught me that I was very able to help others and that it really makes you feel good when a 10-year-old boy with a not very promising future looks up at you and says, 'Thanks. I couldn't have made it without you.' "

—Kevin Rice, 17

in service as an extracurricular activity and receive extra credit or credit toward the school's work requirement. Some schools offer optional courses—often a social studies class—that include a community service requirement. A small but growing number of schools and districts are mandating it. They require students to put in a certain number of hours of community service to graduate from high school, an approach many private schools take.

Increasingly, the thrust is not only to encourage students to do service work, but also to offer opportunities for reflection and discussion about the experiences. Often—but not always—students go into the community. Some activities are classroom based: the home-economics class, for example, in which students make baby clothes for the poor, rather than skirts for themselves.

Although the calls for community service are now coming from the highest levels of government, grassroots groups have been promoting the idea for several years. Several organizations—such as Youth Service America in Washington, D.C., the Thomas Jefferson Forum in Boston, the Constitutional Rights Foundation in Los Angeles, and the National Youth Leadership Council in St. Paul—have been tireless advocates for student service. Working through teacher coordinators at individual schools, these groups have helped involve hundreds of thousands of students in service.

Gradually, the education establishment has picked up on the idea. Major education studies, such as the recent report on the middle school years, *Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century*, have endorsed it. Prominent education organizations, like the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, have as well.

Last year, Minnesota became the first state in the country to require all its public schools to offer some form of service learning. The state board of education adopted the policy, and

the Legislature passed a measure to help localities fund its implementation. Several other states and districts have launched initiatives to encourage teachers and schools to come up with service programs.

Pennsylvania, for example, created PennSERVE about two years ago. One of its goals is to integrate service into the schools. Sixty schools have been given small grants to develop programs. Three districts in the state now require service; two others are expected to join them shortly. And in Philadelphia, all 28 general-purpose high schools are engaged in a 10-year effort to restructure their schools around three principles, one of which is community service. That project is receiving major funding from the Pew Memorial Trust.

Washington, D.C.—less than an hour away from Hornbeck's former office in Maryland—has adopted the mandatory school-service requirement that he had sought in that state. Approved last year, the requirement will begin with the 1991-92 school year. A handful of other urban school districts—Atlanta and Detroit among them—already have made service mandatory.

And in many places, community service has been gathering momentum from the ground up—often beginning with one teacher or one school.

No nationwide figures are available on the number of schools or students now participating in youth-service programs. But Frank Slobig, director of Youth Service America, estimates that between one million and two million students are involved in active programs, most of them in high schools. YSA is a national umbrella group for programs around the country.

Social studies teacher Conrad is watching all this activity with a slight sense of déjà vu. He made service a requirement for his students at Hopkins High School in Minnesota in the early 1970's. Then, as now, the push was to link education to society's needs. But, he says, this time the mood is different.

Twenty years ago, Conrad says, the rationale was to make education more lively and interesting and to encourage students to help solve society's problems. What a lot of people are saying now, he notes, "is that we need to add service because it will have a positive effect on the students' values, that they'll be less narcissistic, less greedy." He sums it up this way: "When we started, the kids were all right and the society was screwed up. Now we get the view that kids are screwed up and that the school and society are O.K."

Most agree with Conrad that a concern about the values of today's youth is giving new life to community service. "If we are a 'nation at risk,' " says Hornbeck, referring to the 1983 report decrying the academic failure of our schools, "it is equally due to the fact that we care too little for one another." Many of society's problems—drugs, teenage pregnancy, AIDS—are issues of values, he says. And the three institutions that transmit values—family, church, and school—are all falling short. "Schools can contribute to the education of the heart, not just the head," Hornbeck argues.

But Hornbeck and other advocates say the advantages of service learning go beyond making students more altruistic. At a time when schools must cope with alarming dropout rates and uninspired students, community service is also seen as an effective educational tool.

Dan Conrad couldn't agree more. His students are required to work through local agencies four days a week, and then have writing assignments and class discussions relating to their experiences. Before he required that kind of service in his elective class, he says, he didn't feel he was having any impact on his students. He recalls the frustration of standing in front of a class trying to teach them things they didn't care to learn. He doesn't feel that way any longer.

"The number one payoff for me is seeing the real difference community service makes in the lives of the students—in a way that doesn't happen in any other class," he says. "They get a perspective on who they are, and a new understanding of the problems of people in the community, and an idea that something can actually be done and that they can be one of those who does something." Over and over again, students say that their community service was the most powerful experience they had in high school, he says.

Virginia Anderson shakes her head. She is thinking back a couple of years to when she had just become principal of Chestnut Junior High School in Springfield, Mass. An annoyed administrator at the retirement home next to the school called her to complain that the students were breaking down the home's fence. "Keep them off our grass," the caller demanded.

Today, the students at Chestnut still go over to the retirement home, but their mission has changed. Last year, Spanish class students taught the residents Spanish so they could communicate with Hispanic employees at the home. Writing students and some of the residents wrote about their childhood memories and then got together to compare their experiences and discuss the changes that have taken place over the years. Students are frequently at the retirement home putting on a show of some sort or just helping out.

English teacher Howard Katzoff's students are among them. Last year, he took a group of his 9th graders, who had received failing grades for the first marking period, and had them learn tongue twisters and nonsense poetry to perform for the senior citizens. "Because it was real, because they were going to perform, the kids cohered as a class," he says. A few formerly apathetic students emerged as leaders. One boy who lives with his grandmother and was comfortable with old people "shone as an emcee," Katzoff recalls.

Anderson says that the community at large had also been hostile to

ANTHONY MOCK REGA

"Today I did volunteer work at Crystal Care Center, a home for the elderly. It was my job to participate at the fund-raising fair from 2 to 4:30.

"I enjoyed chatting and being of assistance to the residents. However, I was quite disturbed by those with Alzheimer's. They were so helpless. It is a terribly bad disease, and I never knew that it is so overbearing.

"Most of the residents are so excited to have company, and that made me feel needed and special. One resident named Chuck and I danced 'til his wheelchair could dance no more. At 4:30, I moved the residents back to their rooms and then played piano for the residents on floor two until 7."

—Liz Nida, 18

the school when she took the helm. The students, she says, were perceived as extremely aggressive. But through a series of community-based projects aimed at helping students get to know their neighborhood, a new school-community relationship developed. The students studied the various immigrant groups that have come to the inner-city area around their school. They learned interviewing skills and constructed oral histories with the long-time residents. They studied urban renewal. The project culminated in a student-produced videotape about the neighborhood that has received high praise in the community.

The service orientation has "totally changed the whole climate in the school," Anderson says. "We have been able to create a culture of caring. That doesn't mean we don't have problems, but kids are getting in trouble less. Children are thinking of things differently."

Anderson's school initiated the community-service programs after the Springfield school district decided, in 1987, that service learning would be integrated into the curriculum of all its schools. "Many teachers initially saw it as an add-on," says Carol Kinsley, the former supervisor of community-service learning for the district and now a consultant to the school system. She was convinced, she says, that service could be made an integral part of the curriculum. Throughout the district, teachers proved her right.

Children at Mary O. Pottenger Elementary School, for example, wanted to plan and prepare several meals for the homeless. A community representative spoke to the children about homelessness in Springfield. The teachers then found ways that the project could be incorporated into the academic program: The 3rd and 4th graders studied nutrition and decided on a menu; a math class calculated the quantities of food and other supplies that would be needed; a writing class wrote to businesses soliciting donations; and the 1st and 2nd graders made centerpieces and place mats.

Kinsley has served as a resource person, but individual schools have decided for themselves how to bring service learning to their students. Each school developed a theme—the community programs at Anderson's junior high, for example, were an outgrowth of the theme, "Be a good neighbor." The service areas fell into several categories: environment; health and safety; the elderly; citizenship; and hunger and homelessness.

Because projects reflect the creativity of individual teachers, students, and administrators, many diverse ideas have emerged. "In Springfield,

Effective Programs: 10 Principles

Last May, the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wis., convened a group of people to develop guidelines for service-learning programs. The 10 principles enumerated by the group took into account the views of more than 70 organizations interested in service learning.

They state that an effective program:

- engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good;
- provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience;
- articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved;
- allows for those with needs to define those needs;
- clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved;
- matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances;
- expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment;
- includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals;
- ensures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved;
- is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

no two programs are the same, and I think the same would be true across the country," says Kinsley.

Not surprisingly, however, the same general service areas do emerge. Many projects involve the elderly, for example. In several places, students have "adopted" senior citizens as grandparents. In the Issaquah school district in Washington, students use their computer keyboarding class to produce a newsletter for a nursing home. According to Jim Seiber, community-education coordinator for the district, the students can't get enough of it. "Once they see how much the seniors appreciate the work they're doing, the students demand to do another one," he says. "How often do we have students demanding to do schoolwork?"

Cross-age tutoring is another popular project in schools across the country. Some programs team potential high school dropouts with elementary students; impressive student gains are consistently reported. In September 1988, a San Antonio, Tex., program called "Valued Youth Partnership" put 95 potential dropouts from four junior high schools to work tutoring younger students. So far none have dropped out. Their attendance, discipline, self-concept, and reading scores have all improved, according to Merci Ramos of the Intercultural Development Research Association, which has studied the program. An earlier project there produced similar results.

Such tutoring programs "have been evaluated to death and they all say the same thing," says John Briscoe of PennSERVE. "Ready-to-drop-out kids make superb tutors."

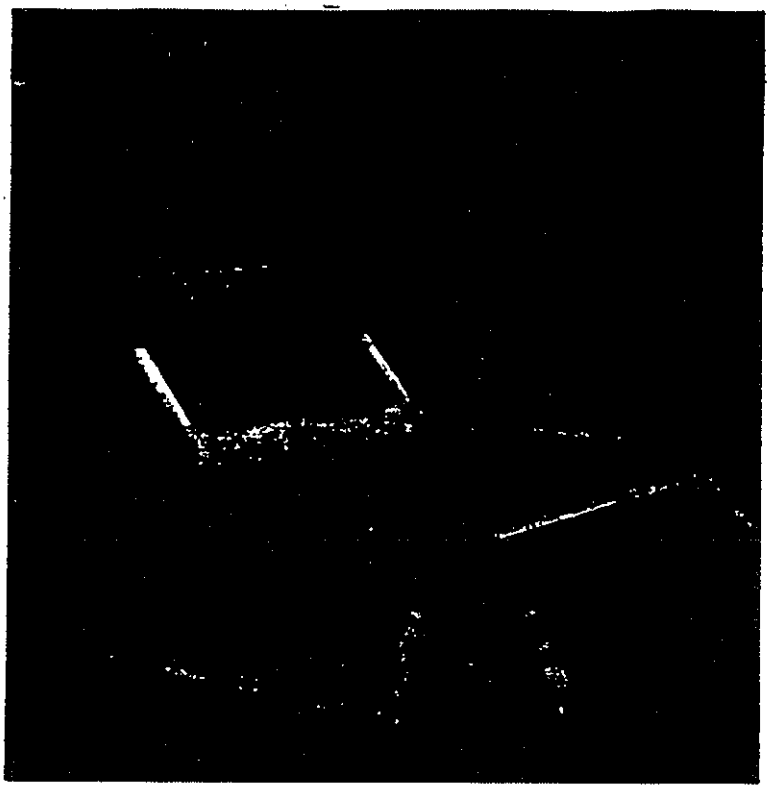
One school in Pennsylvania linked dropout prevention and community service in another way. First, the school earmarked the 25 students at the bottom of its 7th grade class. The following year, those students spent only half of each school day in the classroom studying academic subjects. For the rest of the day, they worked on construction projects for the community. They built a learning center at the local zoo, for example. Twenty percent of those students subsequently made the honor roll, according to Briscoe.

Often school projects are tailored to specific local needs. An industrial-arts class in Washington, for instance, worked with a local hospital to design and build a wheelchair for an 18-month-old handicapped child. Students from a civics class at another Washington high school helped a local immigrant study for—and pass—his citizenship exam. And now under discussion in Seattle is a project that would have the biology class at Cleveland High School, which has a large Asian population, work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to monitor toxins in aquatic life in the Puget Sound. The idea for the project arose because of the EPA's concern that the quantity and types of seafood from the Sound eaten by the local Vietnamese residents may pose a health hazard. In addition to learning about marine life and sampling and measuring techniques, the students would help educate the local community about safe eating habits.

Kate McPherson, director of Project Service Leadership in Washington, says such projects not only make learning more meaningful and increase retention, but they also "foster a higher level of thinking."

The industrial-arts students, she notes, had to take the concepts from their design class and then determine what kind of material would be durable enough for the wheelchair and how to make it so it could expand as the child grows. The civics students not only had to know their facts, but they also had to figure out how to communicate the concept of the Constitution to someone unfamiliar with it. "When they are asked to apply skills and information from the academic courses to real situations, they have to use problem-solving skills—it puts an application process into the learning curve," says McPherson.

One of the most dramatic examples of a school integrating service learning into its educational mission is the Challenger Middle School in Colorado Springs, Colo. Four years



ANTHONY WOOLREKE

"Recently I coordinated a party for kids at the Harbor Interfaith Shelter for homeless families. . . . When we began taking Polaroid photos of the children, they were so excited. Mr. Farley, my 'Youth Community Service' and English teacher, gave us an idea for our next project. Most of the parents could not afford film, much less cameras. Their children were growing older, and they would have no photos to remember them. 'Poverty means more than a loss of food and shelter,' Mr. Farley pointed out. I am now coordinating a project to return to the shelter with photographers to take candid shots and portraits of the children to give to their parents.

"I have learned that fortunate people should help the less fortunate. I'm very satisfied lending my hand to people in need. YCS gives me that chance. I believe sincerely that I am making a difference."

—Ada Briceno, 16

ago, Challenger converted from a junior high to a middle school, and in the process made community service a centerpiece of the new program. The project is called HUGSS—for Helping Us Grow Through Service and Smiles.

Challenger's student body is divided into teams of 50 to 100 students, each with two to four teachers. Each team—bearing names like the "Tubular Turtles," "Divine Ducks," and "Pink Cadillacs"—chooses at least one community agency to "adopt." Throughout the school year, they perform service projects through that organization.

Members of the "Whoosh" team, for example, help preschoolers in a local program for the deaf and blind. The relationship has been so successful that several spin-offs have resulted: The hearing-impaired principal of a high school for the deaf and blind was invited to Challenger to address the students; some students became so interested in signing as a result of his presentation that they have asked to learn it; and a chorus teacher at Challenger arranged for 7th grade deaf students to teach choir members to sign a song called "Love in Many Languages."

Last year, some students decided they wanted more community projects. With guidance from a teacher, they contacted local agencies serving the hungry and homeless. After researching the problem, they worked in a soup kitchen and sponsored a food drive at the school.

Service work "really does increase self-esteem," says Elaine Andrus, coordinator of the HUGSS program. "It makes them more effective learners, and it gives them a sense of caring. Students become more tolerant of each other and more eager to help. And it develops good relations with the community."

She adds a comment often heard among those involved with service learning: "I don't understand why everybody doesn't do it."

Despite the growing interest in service learning, its future in the schools is hardly assured. It is not that administrators or teachers dispute what can be achieved—both for the student and the community. What puts its future in question is more a matter of priorities, logistics, and traditional resistance to change.

Hornbeck, the former commis-

sioner of education in Maryland, notes that "the decibel level of the debate has dropped" since 1984, when his proposal for mandatory service caused such an uproar.

"There has been a significant drop in the number of people who flatly oppose the idea," he says. In fact, he adds, it may now be difficult to find an outright opponent of school-service programs.

But the cost of paying program coordinators, concerns about liability, and the current focus on improving test scores continues to dampen enthusiasm in some quarters. Sometimes, it's just the typical institutional resistance to change that stands in the way. "The major opponent is superintendents' inertia," says PennSERVE's Briscoe. "This is really a profound change in how we run our schools."

Last year, after the Washington, D.C., school board approved the mandatory service requirement, *The Washington Post* ran an editorial questioning the decision. Although it acknowledged the benefits of service learning, the editorial went on to say: "How will struggling pupils from less supportive families or students who must spend several hours at paying jobs respond to this new task? . . . It will take a major push to develop a pool of jobs, create convenient matches with the students, and watch over the process. It is not as though the schools were already performing their prime—academic—function with great success."

Hornbeck is ready with responses to those and other jabs. On the question of working students, he cites a study from a couple of years ago that found that fewer than 10 percent of families depend on the income of students. Moreover, he emphasizes, a 100-hour high school requirement amounts to less than two hours a week.

He doesn't deny that setting up and monitoring placements involves extra work, but he has a story for those who think that finding enough placements might be difficult. It goes back to his days as commissioner in Maryland, when he was encouraging superintendents to develop service programs. A superintendent in a fairly rural area of the state thought there might not be enough work for the students to do. A year later, the superintendent reported that with 50 percent of his students in community placements, more than 400 service slots were left that he couldn't fill.

But the *Post* editorial's final point—that community service might get in the way of a school's prime function—is the one that advocates are most eager to rebut. They argue that service learning, with its potential for teaching children values and citizenship skills, should be viewed as being on a par with—not in competition with—the traditional academic subjects.

Moreover, many argue that the gains in self-esteem and school attendance and the general improved attitude toward school associated with some service programs boost learning in the academic subjects, and even test scores. As one teacher puts it: "It just doesn't make sense to pit math and science against community service. If the kid's not in school, how can he learn?"

The surge of interest in student service in the 1970's faded away with only a few surviving programs to show for it. But many advocates say that the current concern about student values presages a brighter future for the school-service movement this time. And while one educational trend—the effort to improve test scores—may work against the movement in some quarters, another educational focus—restructuring schools—may help it. In several states, service learning has been an important component of restructuring efforts.

The enthusiasm of those engaged in service projects has encouraged some skeptics to give it a try. But advocates acknowledge that education leaders will have to make it clear that the values-education associated with service learning is fundamental to a school's mission before some students, teachers, and administrators will regard it as more than a frill. What is critical, says Hornbeck, is that measures used to assess schools incorporate goals associated with service learning.

And then, perhaps, what happened in Springfield last year will be less likely to occur. When Massachusetts was forced to make drastic budget cuts in response to a tax-cutting referendum, funding for community service in Springfield was one of the things to go. Although Springfield has been considered a model program—visited by politicians and educators alike—funding for the supervisory position held by Kinsley was abolished. State funds that had been used by schools there and elsewhere in the state to pay teachers who coordinate service programs were also drastically reduced.

Within the next several months, Congress is expected to pass—with the Administration's blessing—a youth-service bill that would provide money to encourage youth service through schools.

But even with the added money and support, advocates say they have a formidable challenge ahead. "What we must do," says Frank Slobig of Youth Service America, "is promote the notion that kids are capable, that they can serve and make a difference at an early age, so that it becomes part and parcel of what growing up means." □

For More Information

The following organizations can provide additional information about service learning:

National Youth Leadership Council
1910 W. County Rd. B
Roseville, MN 55113
(612) 631-3672 or
(800) 366-6952

Youth Service America
1319 F St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 783-8855