



# AMERICORPS

GIVE BACK FOR A YEAR. SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY. CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

"Getting Things Done"  
Edited by Carolyn Matzinger, Char-Em ISD

Michigan Edition

## Future of AmeriCorps is Brighter Than Ever by Andy Younger, MCSC

Any prosperous person, organization, or nation must be able to find ways to overcome tragedy with triumph. As AmeriCorps members, we see such victories everyday, in the people we serve, and within ourselves. In response to the disasters in 2001, our nation's leaders immediately began to search for sources of strength within our borders. It didn't take them long to recognize that AmeriCorps programs throughout the country have become just that. The individual work we do, even if with just one person at a time, is making a difference and improving the lives of people throughout

our country.

Our work as AmeriCorps members is an example of what makes the greatness of our nation unparalleled. In our President's January 29<sup>th</sup> State of the Union address, he specifically acknowledged AmeriCorps' significance. In a call to all Americans to serve their nation, plans were announced to expand AmeriCorps and similar national programs to 200,000 members. An important factor to note in the President's support of AmeriCorps is that both Democrats and Republicans are behind such measures.

With the future of AmeriCorps no longer a partisan issue, the question we are asking ourselves now is not "How long will AmeriCorps last," but "How much can AmeriCorps do?" As members today, it is up to us to show that what we can do for the nation tomorrow has no limits.



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### Special points of interest:

- *Future of AmeriCorps*
- *Individual Program Highlights From Around Our State*
- *Background on the AmeriCorps Michigan*

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## Christmas Is About Giving

By Sharon Lutz, ReadingCorps

The focus of theReadingCorps is to improve the literacy of children in Ionia County. However, they also get involved with community service projects. In December, they worked with the Ionia County FIA to make Christmas a little brighter for some area children. The program allowed children in need to go "Christmas shopping" free of charge. FIA had a room in their facility organized with a variety of gifts for the whole family. Each participating child was able to choose one Christmas present for each member of his or her immediate family. ReadingCorps members assisted with children in choosing their gifts, and also helped with the gift wrapping. When their shopping was complete, each child visited Santa, and received a special gift. The ReadingCorps and other dedicated volunteers spent five hours taking children through the "store."

Last year there were less than 300 children who participated. This year people had to be sent away after 400 numbers were given out. It was an especially sad economic indicator.



# Central Elementary School in Petoskey Learns About

By Carolyn Matzinger, Char-Em ISD

The focus of the Char-Em ISD's AmeriCorps program is to provide conflict resolution training to children within the ISD's jurisdiction. During the 2001/02 school year, 18 AmeriCorps members are working in various settings, from elementary schools to alternative high schools.

This fall, Central Elementary school children in Petoskey have been studying the topic of bullying under the direction of AmeriCorps member, Carolyn Matzinger. Using age appropriate songs, skits, art projects and writing assignments, the students have learned to recognize the effects bullying behaviors have on both the victim and the bully, as well as strategies to deal with bullying behaviors. The Johnson and Johnson "No Bullying" curriculum used is part of a year long series of lessons on conflict resolution.

During the winter and spring months, Ms. Matzinger will facilitate classes dealing with peer to peer conflict, utilizing the Johnson and Johnson "Peacemakers" program. In addition to teaching conflict resolution, Ms. Matzinger has tutored children in math and reading.



Ms. Matzinger with members of Mrs. Greer's 1st Grade class.

## KOPS Helping Detroit Schools by Julie Galvin, NonViolence KOPS

The overall goal of the AmeriCorps Nonviolence KOPS program is to create a clean, safe and healthy environment in Detroit Public Schools and communities through the presence of 52 trained AmeriCorps members who deliver violence prevention services.

dents.

In addition to developing Peace Centers, Nonviolence KOPS members also help supervise students to ensure their safety during the busiest school hours and recruit local volunteers to support school programming. When school is not in session the members will be placed in local community based organizations to bring the message of peace and nonviolence to even more youth.

KOPS members receive 160 hours of training and staff Peace Centers in 26 Detroit Public Schools. These centers provide support and guidance for students needing individual attention and also act as safe havens for the stu-

*"Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive."*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The KOPS program is certified in the Kingian Nonviolence Philosophy developed by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Conserving Our Natural Resources by Chris Frederick, MI Civilian Conservation Corps

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps is a service oriented employment and training program based on the original CCC of the Depression era. It was founded in 1984 and teamed up with the AmeriCorps program in 1998.



The goals of the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps are two-fold: to provide a constructive service-oriented employment experi-

ence for young adults and to improve our state's natural resources. Enrollees live in either a residential camp setting or live at home and are assigned to a specific park.

Maintaining camping facilities and grounds, planting, pruning and cutting trees. Developing wildlife habitat and maintaining and improving trails are just some of the many duties performed by the over 264 members. MCCC enrollees currently serve in 82 counties across Michigan.



## Give Ground Water a Hand by Tara Egnatuk, MI Groundwater

Over half of Michigan's residents rely on groundwater for their drinking water. Groundwater also recharges our surface waters, which are used for drinking, as well as habitat for fish and other creatures in rivers, streams and lakes. Preventing groundwater contamination is necessary to sustain our health and quality of life here in the Great Lakes State. This explains why the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP) is important. The MGSP employs AmeriCorps members all over the state from Marquette to Detroit, in big cities and small villages. The AmeriCorps members help individuals identify and reduce groundwater contamination risks associated with daily activities in and around their home. Activities that may cause drinking water contamination include: over application of lawn and garden chemicals, improper disposal of hazardous household chemicals, improperly maintained septic systems, and improper disposal and handling of liquid fuels.



Kids in Branch County take a groundwater message home to parents..

Through public education and awareness the MGSP AmeriCorps is helping individuals protect groundwater and safeguard the state's fresh water resource. If you would like more information about this program or would like to connect with a member near you please call Tara Egnatuk at 517-278-2725 ext. 5 or email tara-smith@mi.nacdn.net.org.

In conjunction with the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, the Family Service Corps organized a "Blizzard of Books" service project designed to collect books at three local high schools for distribution to homeless shelters, schools, mentoring programs, the Family Independence Agency and local nursing homes.

Colon, and Burr Oak high school cheerleaders, the project collected 2, 410 books and is slated to become an annual event. A traveling trophy, which was presented at a half time ceremony to the winning high school, will be awarded annually to the school that collects the most books . In 2001, Constantine High School took first place with 1,573 books collected.

*"A lot of kids in the county don't have the opportunity to sit down and read."*

*Julie Rhinehart,  
Family Service Corp*

Utilizing the support of the Constantine , AmeriCorps member Julie Rhinehart

noted that books were collected for all ages and reading levels and will touch the lives of over 500 children in St. Joseph county.

## Taking Detroit by Storm by Kim Haranczak, City Year Detroit

City Year is a national service program that unites a diverse group of 17-24 year olds for a challenging year of full time service, leadership development and civic engagement. There are 13 City Year sites across the United States. City



City Year Detroit Members Rally

Year Detroit has a corps of 70 members who work on eight teams throughout the Metropolitan Detroit area. Seven of these teams serve in schools as tutors and mentors. In addition to these duties the corps members run after school programs for the students in their schools.

The eighth team runs the Young Heroes program, which is a mini version of City Year for middle school students on Saturdays. Every other Friday is dedicated to a physical service day for the entire corps. We do a variety of transformative service projects including painting, sorting canned foods, building playscapes and tearing down abandoned drug houses. If you want to learn more about City Year, visit our website at [www.cityyear.org](http://www.cityyear.org).

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**We're on the Web**  
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## National Service in Michigan:

### The AmeriCorps Story

This year AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, will provide more than **800 individuals** the opportunity to spend a year serving in Michigan communities. In return, AmeriCorps members receive an education award of up to \$4,725 to help pay for college or pay back student loans. To date, more than **3,800** Michigan residents have qualified for education awards totaling more than **\$13,000,000**. Two-thirds of AmeriCorps grants are made by the Michigan Community Service Commission. National nonprofits make other assignments. Other members serve in AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and AmeriCorps\*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).



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## Washtenaw Family Support Network

by Manisha Leary, Washtenaw Family Support Network

This year in Washtenaw County, the AmeriCorps members spearheaded a food and personal needs drive at Olive Adams elementary school in Ypsilanti, to benefit The Crisis Center. The Crisis Center is a resource for the community in terms of food and personal care items, and therefore needs to have a steady supply of donations. To facilitate donations around the holidays, the Washtenaw AmeriCorps group requested that Adams school conduct a food drive.

It turned out to be quite a success, with over 4,500 items donated to the Crisis Center.



It took a lot of effort and heart to transport all the items, and the Crisis Center extends a warm thank you to all the AmeriCorps members and staff who helped. This project has been praised and appreciated by S.O.S. staff and will definitely make a difference in the community. The AmeriCorps members also appreciated the enthusiasm of the students and teachers at Olive Adams school who helped make this project such a resounding success.