

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

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GOVERNOR PATERSON ANNOUNCES AMERICORPS WEEK TO HONOR NEW YORKERS ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

Encourages New Yorkers to Embrace Volunteerism to Help Improve Communities

Governor David A. Paterson today announced that May 11-18 will be nationally observed as AmeriCorps Week. New York will honor nearly 8,000 New York State residents who currently serve as AmeriCorps members – a group committed to improving the quality of life in communities throughout the State. As part of AmeriCorps Week, a variety of celebrations and service projects will take place across the State. New York State has more AmeriCorps Week activities planned than any other state in the nation with more than 40 events scheduled.

“AmeriCorps members help to improve the lives of our State’s residents by meeting the needs of local communities,” said Governor Paterson. “They also strengthen our educational system, protect our environment, and contribute to public safety. It is through this kind of service that we see the true meaning of civic duty – how the selflessness of volunteerism can profoundly change lives. I not only encourage all New Yorkers to join me in thanking these volunteers who help make New York a better place to live, but I also encourage them to embrace volunteerism throughout the State.”

AmeriCorps members serve as tutors and mentors to disadvantaged youth, run after-school programs, teach computer skills, fight illiteracy, improve health services, build affordable housing, clean parks and streams, and help communities respond to disasters.

AmeriCorps is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps is comprised of three main programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).

The Corporation for National and Community Service announced Friday that AmeriCorps Programs in New York would receive more than \$9 million in competitive federal funding for 2008 – this is nearly \$1 million more than received last year. Grand Street Settlement, Groundwork, Inc., Public Allies, Inc., and the Research Foundation of SUNY Cortland were selected among 132 applicants nationwide to receive AmeriCorps grants. These new programs, as well as ongoing programs, will receive awards today that represent approximately half of the AmeriCorps portfolio in New York State. In June, the New York State Commission will competitively award more than \$6 million additional dollars to at least 20 more AmeriCorps programs.

The New York State Commission on National and Community Service – whose members are appointed by the Governor – is charged with fostering volunteerism and community service activities to meet the needs of New Yorkers. The Commission administers the AmeriCorps State programs’ funding for organizations to

run local programs that engage individuals from all backgrounds in community service. The Commission receives administrative support from the state Office of National and Community Service.

In New York State this year, AmeriCorps will give nearly 8,000 individuals the opportunity to provide intensive, results-driven service to meet educational, environmental, public safety, and other pressing needs in communities across the state. After successful completion of service, AmeriCorps members can earn an education award of up to \$4,725, which can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Since AmeriCorps' inception in 1994, more than 40,000 New York residents have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Award totaling more than \$141 million.

Some of the AmeriCorps Week activities planned across the state include:

Capital District Region

- Albany United Methodist Society (AUMS) AmeriCorps plans to partner with the Capitol District Habitat for Humanity on Tuesday, May 13, to work on a new home building project.
- Self Advocacy Association of NYS, Capital-North Region, will hold an open house from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, May 13, at its offices at 500 Balltown Road, Schenectady. There will be AmeriCorps presentations at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Central New York Region

- Oswego County AmeriCorps members will hold a fun fair and information program on summer opportunities for children at 3 p.m. Thursday, May 15, at the Rural & Migrant Ministry offices in Richland.

New York City Region

- The City Year New York program, which has 184 full-time members involved in public education, out-of-school-time programs and volunteer generation, held its 5th Annual One Harlem Service Celebration on Saturday, May 10. They organized 400 community members and students to work on beautification projects. That same day, City Year hosted an East New York Community Service Day (Brooklyn), bringing together 150 community members and students in physical beautification projects. On Saturday, May 17, City Year will close AmeriCorps week by organizing 150 people in a service project in Bedford-Stuyvesant. All three community events involve painting, landscaping, and carpentry projects.
- The Red Hook Public Safety Corps in Brooklyn encourages the public to participate in its second of two "It's My Park Day" beautification efforts as part of its AmeriCorps Week celebrations. The event will be held on Saturday, May 17 at 10 a.m., at Brooklyn's Prospect Park. The first event was held on Saturday, May 10 at Coffey Park in Red Hook. Also, Red Hook members will participate, wearing AmeriCorps shirts and carrying banners, in the Sunday, May 18, AIDS Walk in New York City's Central Park. Housed at the Red Hook Community Justice Center, the Safety Corps has 36 full-time and 10 part-time members who create and implement projects involving public safety and community strengthening in Red Hook and other parts of Brooklyn.
- Members of The After-School Corporation (TASC) will assist the New York Junior League's Playground Improvement Project on May 17, helping to plant, landscape and garden at the James J. Walker Park and the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center in Greenwich Village.
- New York Restoration Project, which works to reclaim and restore underutilized space in distressed New York City communities, will hold a Family Day on May 17, at Swindler Cove Park (Northern Manhattan / Washington Heights) for community residents. That same day, its volunteer corps will participate in New York City's Million Trees initiative.

North Country Region

- The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program in Malone, Franklin County, will mark AmeriCorps week by having county legislators help deliver "Meals on Wheels." The program will also recognize all the Meals on Wheels volunteers with certificates of appreciation.

Western New York Region

- Members of Western NY AmeriCorps will involve area youth in the renovation of a Buffalo school. Other members have formed a Gulf Coast Rebuilding Team, and will help in recovering regions of the Gulf Coast.
- Rochester AmeriCorps will address the Rochester City Council at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 13. Also, members will join with other AmeriCorps programs in Rochester, including AmeriCorps VISTA members, in a neighborhood cleanup on May 17, as part of the city's Clean Sweep program.
- Genesee County AmeriCorps members will exhibit displays at host site agencies throughout the week, sharing information about their projects and AmeriCorps.
- The Belle Center AmeriCorps program, part of Erie Regional Housing Development Corp., will donate 100 hours and partner with the Mayor's Impact Team and other volunteers to help transform an eight-block area of Buffalo.

For more information about AmeriCorps Week celebrations and events, please visit <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/Youth/nyscnscs/> or go to visit www.AmeriCorps.gov.

To view the proclamation declaring AmeriCorps Week in New York State, [click here](#).

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