



# MSUCORPS: A BETTER TOMORROW



## MSUCORPS PROGRAM PROVIDES – COMMUNITY BUILDING BLOCKS

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### Changing Lives through the ABCs . . .

Assuring early literacy success for young readers.

Building healthy reading habits for families.

Challenging young adults to a lifetime of service.

AmeriCorps members are as young as 17 and may be over 80, they are individuals who are committed to serving their communities and country. AmeriCorps members are from all walks of life, reflecting America’s diversity in age, ethnicity, education, race, gender, and religion. AmeriCorps is a national program that engages people in service to meet community needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other areas. Members serve in nonprofit, and community and faith-based organizations. Full-time members give one year of service providing 1700 hours of service and part-time members serve fewer hours.

There are opportunities in AmeriCorps for anyone who is willing to do something special, something unique, something exciting. Each one provides an incredible opportunity to make a difference in your life and in the lives of those around you. Whether your service makes a community safer, gives a child a second chance, or helps protect the environment, you have the ability to find solutions and make a difference.

This type of service is critically important development because volunteering is no longer just nice to do. It is a necessary aspect of meeting the most pressing needs facing our nation: crime, gangs, poverty, disasters, illiteracy, and homelessness. It is also an important part of maintaining the health of our citizens, as research consistently shows that those who volunteer, especially those 65 years and older, lead healthier lives than those who do not engage in their communities.

### Success Story by Jerlyn Grant, Danielle Curd, Braun Ream, Josh Purtee, and Dave Matthew

As part of their AmeriCorps volunteer services, they volunteered at Light On After school held on Thursday, November 1, 2007 at the National Guard Armory in Ashland, Kentucky. It lasted from 4:30–6:30 p.m. This event honored all the after school programs in the surrounding areas and included many fun activities for parents and children. Lights on After school is sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and 21st

Century Community Learning Center. The coordinators provided the different entertainment such as face painting, inflatable's, tumbling, and student choir performances. Also provided were free pizza and pop, cotton candy, popcorn, sno-cones, a live DJ, and a balloon artist. Children and parents greatly enjoyed the celebration. It was a very memorable, fun, and safe environment for the community to come together.



***"Now, he wants to make it through school, he wants to make it through life."***

### **Success Story by Cassie Cox**

The past few weeks I have been working with a student that could care less if he made it through the school year. I have always had that one child on my mind and thought what would happen if he just gave up all together, he wouldn't make it anywhere in life and he would continue to struggle.

So we had a talk and I discussed with him what would happen if he didn't make a little effort in life and how it would effect how he ends up. More and more each day I would see a slight improvement, but I could still tell that he didn't want to be there. One day, I brought him some information off the internet about different jobs that he would have been able to get with a high school diploma and a college degree.

Then I showed him what kind of job he would get with NO education at all. He really did not like the results. From that moment on, he tried a lot harder each day and each day I saw more and more improvement. He could not wait for me to get there just so he could read to me. He asked if it was ok when people dropped out of school because that is what his older brother had done. Now he is very concerned with his grades because he WANTS to make it through school, he wants to make it through life. The more he reads to me, the better he gets. I would have to say out of all my 20 students so far, he is the one that has improved the most. Because of students like him, I am thankful for programs like this.

### **Success Story by Kristin Closson**

Working with older children can be a challenge. You have to capture their attention and keep it. Several of my 6th graders have difficulty getting excited about reading. It's always a challenge to get them to understand that what they're reading about can actually be "cool". The 6th grade was reading about ancient Egypt one week. Being a lover of history, I took advantage of the situation and showed them research I had found about

ancient Egypt. I showed their teacher several fun and interactive websites. After reading their story, they were asking questions about Egypt. I truly felt success seeing that these children were interested in reading and wanted to have discussions about it. Doing some extra research helped my 6th graders be more interested in their stories. The more they discuss, the more they will retain and comprehend what they are reading.

### **Success Story by Tiffany Sartin**

I participated in the Fall Bash at the Ramsey building in Owingsville. I really enjoyed doing this. Not only did I get to see some of my students outside of work, they got to see me on a different level. I feel that my students really enjoyed seeing me outside of tutoring them. When I saw one of them they would tell their parents that I'm their tutor. This made me feel good knowing that they like me and wanted to show their parents who I was. I felt meeting their parents was important as well. I met knew people who were very nice. They told me how much they appreciated me

helping out and how they could not have been able to get everything finished without my assistance. I served the food for the program; we provided free hot dogs, chips, cookies, and pop for all participants. I hope I can help out again.



Building Better  
Lives



***"I know that I can not solve their problems but I can listen and offer suggestions"***

### Success Story by Melinda Hickman

My first day, I was nervous. I was very fortunate because I was stationed in the library for the first few weeks before I started working with the Great Leaps. I was able to meet a lot of students, learn some of the rules and what the curriculum was consisted. The extra time in the beginning enabled me to understand what the children were talking about and wanted me to talk to them about how their goals could be met, and to set extra sessions for some students to work with them on their goals. I have been able to connect with several of the children in my group. There are about 8 children that confide in me



weekly. They have opened up to me in ways that I did not think could happen so quickly. I have built a relationship with these children and they trust me and look up to me for guidance.

I have heard stories that I do not think any child should have to experience. I have seen their pain, their wanting acceptance, and frustration. Most kids I work with are not accepted for who they are. The 8 I worked with end up in alternative school and detention. I know I cannot solve

their problems but I can listen and offer suggestions.

### A Success Story by Tom Perry

I had worked with this child previously. It wasn't his behavior I was worried about, it was his speech. He suffers from a hereditary disorder that affects his speech and reading. During and after the assessment I thought I was going to have to release the student because I could not understand what he was saying. I waited to release him because of his positive attitude and determination. He stopped me in the hall with one of his friends. He smiled and said, "You help me, you can help my friend too." I thought if this child is benefiting from the mentoring aspect, I

would not release him. I met with the speech therapist for advice on how to deal with the disorder. She gave me suggestions to properly practice phonics with him. After a few weeks of her suggestions in the program, I am able to understand him. I wasn't the only one who could tell the difference. The speech therapists and teachers applauded the improvement. I was troubled that this child may be passed over his entire life and not given a chance to succeed because of something he could not help. His mother has agreed to be trained on how to use *Great Leaps* with her son.

### Success Story by Stephanie Mathews

The Girls' Club at Heritage Elementary is open to fourth and fifth grade students. In this club, girls not only learn valuable life skills, but also have a great time together. The girls enjoy guest speakers such as a doctor to explain puberty and all the changes girls can expect; a police officer to talk about general safety; and a lesson on internet safety. We also cover a wide variety of basic skills such as cooking.

This year we were able to raise enough money to take our club to Kentucky Christian University for the Feast of Christmas. The girls are looking forward to an elegant evening including dinner and a show. For some of these girls, this will be the only opportunity for them to enjoy an evening like this. We are so excited! I am proud to be part of the Girls' Club at Heritage.



## Success Story by Rebecca Craft

November was a busy month but I feel my biggest success that month was helping out with the Dustin Jude Memorial Walk for Juvenile Diabetes. Dustin was a student that had attended one of the schools that I worked at and had died from diabetes so it was great honor to help was many for awareness of the disease and to try an help find a cure for the disease. The day turned out to be a great success the last count we had raised over 22 thousand dollars to help fight the battle against juvenile diabetes. The AmeriCorps members that helped out at this event was myself, Keri, Cassie and our newest member Mandy. We all had a great time helping out for the event. We set up and worked from 8:30 that morning until 3:30 that afternoon. I was told later that day from the teacher that was running the event she could not have done it with out all of our help. Which makes us feel pretty good that we could help someone that much. This is the kind of stuff I really enjoy doing helping the community out when they are in need.

We're on the Web at  
[www.americorps.com](http://www.americorps.com)

## Success Story by Josh Purtee, Jerelyn Grant, Danielle Curd, and Christina McCall

These members were involved in a community service project for the month of November, which was the CARES Giving Tree. The Giving Tree was organized to provide help for needy families during the holiday season. AmeriCorps members manned the booth, encouraged people to donate gifts, and collected the donated gifts. CARES stands for Community Assistance and Referral Services. It is a community-based non-profit organization that helps families in emergency and crisis situations. They also provide services and referrals, and serves as an informational clearinghouse for churches and agencies. CARES also provides assistance with utilities, prescriptions, transportations, and other essential necessities.

## Success Story by Mary Williamson

What I did on Make a Difference day was volunteer to help feed the Shut-in Program. It was a wonderful experience. There are three local churches that came together to provide meals for people throughout the community. These people aren't able to get out. Some of them may be sick or just from an older generation. We let the people pick something off of a menu, then we made it brought it to the church. There was a whole lot of volunteers who helped prepare individual dinners for about 120 people. After the dinners were sorted, we were put on a delivery route. When we got to the people's home, they were excited. When we knocked on the doors, I have never seen such thankfulness. It made my heart so happy to be able to leave knowing how many lives that you can make a difference in. On Make a Difference day, we should always be happy to help out when we can.



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