

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
July 31, 2014
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m., ET

The Board of Directors convened in New York, N.Y. The following members of the Board were present:

Lisa Garcia Quiroz, Chair

Hyepin Im

Matthew McCabe

Phyllis Segal

Chair's Opening Remarks

Board Chair, Lisa Garcia Quiroz, called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. One member of the Board, Jane Hartley, was unable to be with the Board for the meeting.

Ms. Quiroz invited members of the public who joined the meeting to comment on the business of the Board, as the Board welcomes the feedback. Anyone wishing to address the Board should sign up so that the Board may accommodate those wishing to present.

Ms. Quiroz gave an overview of the agenda for the meeting. She would give brief opening remarks and share the highlights of the Board retreat that was held that morning and the day prior. The Board would approve the minutes from the last Board meeting in March 2014, and then the CEO, Wendy Spencer, would provide her report to the Board. Finally, the Board will hear national service testimonials from three speakers. At the end of the meeting Ms. Quiroz will open the floor to public comments.

The Board began the retreat by hearing from Ms. Spencer, who presented an overview of CNCS's accomplishments this year. The Board then had a presentation on the changing demographics of the U.S. with a focus on the Millennial population. This was a very interesting presentation because the demographics have such an effect on the work that CNCS does in engaging young people in public service. The demographic changes in the U.S. have been quite dramatic and it is important for CNCS to be inclusive in recruiting young people into national service and to ensure that the service movement continues.

Next, Ms. Quiroz stated that the Board heard from several AmeriCorps grantee organizations. Teach for America, City Year, and the Rochester AmeriCorps organizations were each

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represented by individuals who spoke about their challenges with diversity and some of the incredible progress that they have made in recruiting a diverse corps of members.

Ms. Quiroz then noted that the Chief Strategy Officer for CNCS, Melissa Bradley, had briefed the Board on some exciting new public and private collaborations. These include collaborations with other federal agencies and collaborations with private organizations that have really advanced the cause of service in the country. Ted Miller, the Chief of External Affairs, also briefed the Board about strong branding enforcement with grantees and about upcoming events to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of AmeriCorps. Lastly, during the Retreat, the Board also heard from Paul Monteiro, the new head of AmeriCorps VISTA.

Ms. Quiroz concluded her opening remarks by mentioning that she had attended the summit entitled “Our Unfinished Work” in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania hosted by the Franklin Project of the Aspen Institute. The Franklin Project is focused on making service an important part of every American’s experience. The summit had a lot of enthusiasm for finding ways to expand national service, and there was a strong level of support for AmeriCorps from both corporate and non-profit sector partners. During the Summit, CNCS made two big announcements. First, Ms. Spencer announced the AmeriCorps partnership challenge, and Ms. Quiroz stated that she had the opportunity to announce the launch of Justice AmeriCorps, a new program that is being done in conjunction with the Department of Justice. Lastly, Ms. Quiroz noted that the 20th Anniversary of AmeriCorps was fast approaching on September 12th, and that the Board was very excited and impressed by CNCS’s plan to commemorate the milestone. The celebration will engage a number of Presidents and will serve to energize the work of CNCS throughout the remainder of the year and bring a lot of passion to national service members everywhere.

Consideration of Prior Meeting’s Minutes

The Board considered and approved by unanimous voice vote the minutes for the public Board meeting held March 11, 2014.

Chief Executive Officer’s Report

Chief Executive Officer Wendy Spencer thanked Ms. Quiroz and the Board members and stated what a pleasure it had been at the Retreat over the last two days because it provides an opportunity to share a glimpse into the work and highlights of the last couple of months since the last Board meeting. Ms. Spencer acknowledged Linda Cohen on the telephone; she is the relatively new Director of the New York State Volunteer Commission – a Commission that is connected to the Governor’s office in New York.

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Ms. Spencer began by acknowledging two guests at the Board meeting. They were Mr. David Jones, the President and CEO of the Community Service Society of New York, and Ms. Alina Molina. Ms. Molina directs the Community Service Society's RSVP program that connects veterans who were involved with the Queens Veterans' Court with mentors who are veterans themselves. Ms. Spencer also introduced a City Year member, Mr. Joey Diaz, who is from New York and serves in New York, and who will be presenting to the Board.

To start her report, Ms. Spencer noted that CNCS has continued to work to expand service opportunities for more Americans in alignment with the President's charge as part of the task force on expanding national service. On April 1, 2014, CNCS hosted the second annual Mayor's Day of Recognition for National Service. It was an amazing groundswell of support and appreciation for national service when 1,760 mayors and municipal executives representing big cities and small towns, urban and rural areas, every region in every state, and of every imaginable political persuasion came together to lift up service as a solution to their communities' challenges, and to thank AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers for their incredible work. Ms. Spencer said that CNCS is working tirelessly to keep the momentum going as the 20th Anniversary of AmeriCorps approaches, and across the country some 900,000 AmeriCorps alumni will take a re-pledge and about 75,000 new AmeriCorps members will take the pledge to commit to service as an AmeriCorps member on September 12th. Events will be held all over the country, to include a swearing in of new AmeriCorps members at the White House.

Ms. Spencer stated that CNCS remains focused on four priorities to advance the mission: expanding economic opportunity; driving innovation and impact; growing national service and volunteerism; and explaining why service matters so much.

Starting with expanding economic opportunities, as part of the President's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, which is designed to empower boys and young men of color by connecting them to job opportunities and to caring mentors, President Obama announced this past week four new AmeriCorps partnerships that will support his initiative. Together, these partnerships represent a total of \$24 million in investments in national service. CNCS joined with the Department of Justice to launch a youth opportunity AmeriCorps to engage youth from underserved communities in national service programs as AmeriCorps members. CNCS and the Department of Agriculture will launch a new partnership to connect youth and veterans to AmeriCorps service opportunities focused on restoring the nation's forest and grasslands. With support from AT&T, AmeriCorps members serving with the ASPIRE Mentoring Academy Corps will engage thousands of youth in mentoring activities across the nation. Ms. Spencer also informed the Board that later that day she will be joining Citi Foundation from the Citibank

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Group, and Points of Light, to launch Service Works. Service Works will be a groundbreaking national service program that will deploy 225 AmeriCorps VISTA members over the next three years to ten cities across America. Those members will help build a large-scale volunteer response to the crisis of low college and career attainment.

In the area of expanding opportunity Ms. Spencer noted that we have what she terms the “27% advantage.” Research that CNCS has conducted reflects that if you volunteer, and you are unemployed and looking for work, that the likelihood of gaining employment is 27% higher than if not volunteering. If you live in a rural area, volunteering increases your chances of finding employment by 55%. When speaking to leaders in the business or nonprofit sectors, Ms. Spencer always emphasizes that volunteers gain skills that employers want and need. The same is also true for the seniors who volunteer with the Senior Corps program. Volunteering allows seniors to gain skills and to have networking opportunities as well. Ms. Spencer noted that the CNCS team has started an Employers of Service initiative by working closely with AmeriCorps Alums and other national service advocacy groups to encourage employers to both seek out volunteers for job opportunities and to ask job seekers about their national service experience to boost those applicants’ chances of landing a job.

In the driving innovation and impact category, Ms. Spencer said that CNCS is thinking about new solutions to old problems. For the second year, CNCS is sponsoring five cluster area trainings across the country in five different regions where national service leaders and Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, Social Innovation Fund grantees, and Volunteer Generation Fund grantees participate in training, to ensure that everyone is well trained, is collaborating together, learning from each other, and sharing best practices.

Ms. Spencer also noted that in June CNCS launched its inaugural Social Innovation Fund pay for success grant competition. CNCS has budgeted \$11.2 million for this unique grant competition to help cities, states, and nonprofits develop pay for success projects, where governments pay service providers only when they are demonstrating results.

Ms. Spencer then noted that CNCS continues to support disaster recovery efforts. The list of CNCS’s post-disaster efforts continues to be long. Just since last March CNCS has responded to nine different disasters, deploying almost 1,600 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants. This includes those in central U.S. and the Mississippi valley, where 628 AmeriCorps national service members are deployed to Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi, and Nebraska to support volunteer reception centers, American Red Cross operations, debris removal, feeding operations, donations management, needs assessments, client casework, state and county

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emergency agency support, and FEMA operations support. This is just a very small snapshot of our work to help our communities recover in the wake of disasters, and it tells you how important AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are in responding to these tragedies.

In the growing national service and volunteerism category, in May the President announced a major expansion of STEM AmeriCorps at the White House Science Fair. This new summer program in six states will place 256 AmeriCorps VISTA members who will serve 18,000 students in low performing schools to connect the students with STEM mentors and opportunities designed to get them very excited about a career in STEM. Earlier this month, CNCS built on its longstanding commitment to Native American Communities when CNCS announced \$3 million in tribal AmeriCorps grants. This funding will increase the number of AmeriCorps members serving tribal communities by a record 41%.

In another example of growing national service and volunteerism, CNCS announced in June 2014, at the Franklin Project that the Agency will be dedicating up to \$30 million in educational scholarships to create new service opportunities across the nation. Ms. Spencer called on everyone in the private sector, nonprofits, philanthropic community, and public agencies at every level to take the AmeriCorps partnerships challenge and bring CNCS ideas about ways to expand national service.

In the final category of explaining why service matters, Ms. Spencer said that it is always important to focus on the impact that our programs are having in communities and to shine the spotlight on the work that is underway. It also includes working with leaders in Congress, in states and local government from both sides of the aisle so that they see our work in improving outcomes for families they serve. Our partnership with Democratic Governor Steve Beshear and Republican Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee Hal Rogers is a very good example. In July Ms. Spencer travelled to eastern rural Kentucky to announce a one million dollar investment in their initiative that is co-chaired by Chairman Rogers and Governor Beshear called “Shaping Our Appalachian Region,” or SOAR. SOAR will allow 52 AmeriCorps VISTA members to provide more than 100,000 volunteer hours dedicated to helping families in Eastern Kentucky get greater access to health care, healthy foods, job training, and financial literacy skills. Ms. Spencer stated that standing together with Governor Beshear and Chairman Rogers to celebrate this program and the difference it is making in their constituents’ lives was a special moment. They met some of the newly enrolled AmeriCorps members, and those members will soon be trained and ready to serve 54 communities throughout this region. This implementation plan led by these two dynamic leaders makes sure that rural Eastern Kentucky has every opportunity to thrive and is a real testament to the outstanding work of the CNCS Office of

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Government Relations and the CNCS's team effort to make sure leaders know how important national service is in communities.

Ms. Spencer concluded by noting that it is very clear that this is a great moment for CNCS. She noted that CNCS is seizing this moment by expanding economic opportunities for Americans through all CNCS programs, driving innovation and real impact on the ground through the 315,000 Senior Corps volunteers, 76,000 AmeriCorps members, and the agencies and organizations that are being supported through the Social Innovation Fund and the Volunteer Generation Fund. Ms. Spencer stated that growing these national service opportunities will, by exploring new investments and partnerships and calling on more Americans to serve and explaining why all of this matters and how service is making a difference, make national service volunteerism and social innovation even more central to meeting our nation's challenges.

Ms. Spencer then introduced Mr. David Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society, and Ms. Alina Molina, the Director of the Community Service Society's RSVP program. The organization is an outstanding Senior Corps grantee of CNCS. The work of the Community Service Society is to ensure more of our veterans who continue to battle the invisible wounds of combat get the support and care they need.

Ms. Spencer then showed a video that showed the vital work being done in New York by the Community Service Society. After the video ended, Ms. Spencer invited Mr. Jones to address the Board.

Mr. Jones addressed the Board by noting that his organization founded RSVP 48 years ago and that it was the prototype for the national program. He also noted that the Community Service Society, now 170 years old, is one of the oldest charities in the country. They were founded before the turn of the century to deal with the waves of European immigration and poverty that developed in the city of New York. The charity is known for three things: 1) they were the founder, in some cases, of social work in America. 2) They founded the Columbia school of social work. 3) They were a leader in healthcare – founding the hospital of special surgery in New York. They were also known from the very beginning as researchers. Mr. Jones said that the charity had a deep hand in creating the prototype work in New York State that created Social Security in America. He said that the charity is still known for its research. The research in housing, education, and healthcare is continually used in New York City and the State. One of the mainstays of the organization is the RSVP program. Launched in 1966, the RSVP program started on Staten Island with 23 volunteers. Today there are 3,555 volunteers working in about 357 community-based organizations throughout the city of New York. Almost 60% of the volunteers are Black or Latino. The Community Service Society actively recruits minorities

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through the African American church and the Latino Pentecostals. Mr. Jones said that they wanted to bring in many minorities so that they could serve the very communities that were the target of what they were doing.

Mr. Jones said that from the beginning RSVP has been built on two pillars. The first is to harness the talents and experience of older adults by giving them important and impactful work. The second pillar for RSVP was to expand and enhance the resources available to communities and the not-for-profit sector. Mr. Jones noted that over the last year, his charity did nearly five million dollars in service, calculated at the minimum wage. They helped 7,000 clients in obtaining government benefits last year. Nearly 800 clients received counseling in debt management. One hundred and fifty children of incarcerated parents were helped and mentored. Eleven thousand veterans received assistance in VA facilities. Six thousand home-bound older adults and people with disabilities received hot delivered meals. Seven hundred home-bound frail elderly and people with disabilities received friendly visitors. Four hundred and ninety clients were assisted in obtaining their GEDs, thus opening doors to employment. Finally, nearly 1,000 clients with poor English skills were assisted in improving their English language fluency.

In conclusion Mr. Jones noted how important RSVP is, not only in New York, but across the country. The program has been able to configure itself to every community in the nation, both rural and urban. Programs that were not originally part of RSVP have blossomed under the basic model. Mr. Jones felt that the program in New York could easily treble or quadruple its program with enough resources.

Ms. Spencer then introduced the next guest, Mr. Joey Diaz, to the Board. He is a member of City Year. Mr. Diaz is from New York and is serving in New York. Mr. Diaz told the Board that he is 22 years old and proudly serves as the senior AmeriCorps member and Team Leader for the City of New York on their Credit Suisse team in East Harlem. He had a very difficult childhood, was raised initially by grandparents and then was placed in foster care when his grandparents passed away. He dropped out of school and with his brother would just play during the day. However, his brother was killed on the street one day and that prompted Mr. Diaz to return to school. He graduated from high school on time by taking extra courses and then joined City Year to help people who were like him. He received a full scholarship to Trinity College and graduated with a degree in educational studies and urban studies. Mr. Diaz said that he serves in City Year as a tribute and legacy to his brother, and for the people like him who have died on the streets of New York for no reason. Many of the young people he works with face the same challenges he had while growing up. Throughout his first year of service, Mr. Diaz saw what extra attention and support can do for a student's ability to reach their full potential. Mr.

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Diaz related a story of how he supported a young man while working with City Year and how that support motivated the young man to reach his potential.

Mr. Diaz concluded by noting that a lot of people ask him why he is doing another year in AmeriCorps, and his response is simply that his work is not yet complete. He wants to reach and impact more students. This year, Mr. Diaz will be back at City Year New York as a team leader at the same school to guide future AmeriCorps members on their first year of service, and he is extremely excited to help other students reach their full potential.

In concluding the Board meeting, Ms. Quiroz thanked the members of the Board and the CNCS staff. She noted that getting to know the staff is one of the great joys of being on the Board. She stated that she knows of no more dedicated, intelligent, incredibly credentialed, and passionate staff than the CNCS staff. She thanked everyone for their service, and thanked the members of the public who joined the Board for the meeting, whereupon she adjourned the Board meeting at 11:45 a.m.