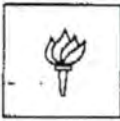


*Service Learning / National
Service*

Service

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June 23, 1997

Vice President Al Gore
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
 Washington, D.C. 20050

Dear Vice President Gore:

I'm writing to congratulate you on the provocative and thoughtful speech you gave at the Communitarian Network Conference on Character Building sponsored by the White House and Congress. I chaired the Task Force on Community Service and Service-Learning, and was heartened to hear you speak of the global, integrative strategies the White House is adopting, exemplified by community empowerment zones. As a behavioral scientist (social psychologist), I couldn't agree more.

The Task Force sees Service-Learning as just this kind of integrative solution. Instead of identifying and targeting numerous, apparently distinct pathologies, as you said, it is a single strategy targeting multiple goals via K-12 and higher education. By building Service-Learning courses and mechanisms for receiving academic credit, educational institutions can guide students into community service and youth development organizations -- the community assets/resources with the expertise to train volunteers to address real social problems.

Service-Learning is community service integrated into an organized curriculum, involving a partnership between community organizations and schools in which students make a real contribution to their community -- either the community of their school (or another school) or the broader community. Students have a choice in the service activities they perform and structured opportunities to reflect in a personal way on these activities so that the experiences can be internalized -- strengthening the ethic of service and caring. Personal reflection may involve journal-writing; it may also involve students talking with one another regularly in informal, small groups, sharing their experiences in serving the common good, hopefully with students and facilitators from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Hence, Service-Learning can break down barriers and build bonds between students who might otherwise not engage in dialogue. When efforts are made to ensure that Service-Learning classes do not become the exclusive province of one racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, Service-Learning can have special value for healing racial tensions and mistrust, by helping youth to work together and build friendships.

Beyond addressing inter-group conflict, Service-Learning is a crucial vehicle for achieving multiple, valued ends: character education, civic education, real community impact, and community building. All of these aims are supported by the Administration and by the Communitarian Network. To the critics of character education and civic education (and the Race Relations Initiative) who ask how

these ideals can be accomplished without meaningful activity, Service-Learning is a concrete, workable answer.

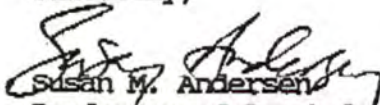
Service-Learning is also central to the America Reads Initiative (and its pending legislation), as you undoubtedly know, because 10th-12th graders and college students can so readily be trained to tutor 1st-4th graders in the context of Service-Learning English courses. This can be supported by Learn and Serve America grants and by AmeriCorps members who organize and train tutors, etc. Thus, Service-Learning can also address the "basics" in education both with America Reads and with math, science, and technology-use tutoring integrated into relevant curricula and environmental service integrated into basic science.

I hope the administration will promote Service-Learning — as a promising and exciting form of teaching and learning that enables hands-on experience for youth, specific opportunities to give back to society, and real mentoring by professionals in active service organizations. In the spirit of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, this could instill a lifelong commitment to volunteerism, while teaching responsibility, respect for diversity, and caring.

Implementing Service-Learning across the nation would require the bully pulpit — with Service-Learning presented an integrative strategy of national significance. A coherent national voice is needed to show leadership, inspire interest, and provide information (such as the National Clearinghouse number, 1-800-808-SERV). Further funding is obviously needed as well — in private-public partnership — in part for a national promotional strategy, and in part for making specific advice and referral to local community agencies more widely available at the national level, along with increases in local staff-development and technical assistance for establishing school-community partnerships and developing relevant curricula. A more active collaboration between the Corporation for National Service and the Department of Education is needed as well.

If teachers and administrators were to work together with community agencies to find a way to make Service-Learning available to all students in every grade and academic level in their own educational institution, with free choice for students as well as for schools and school districts — i.e., with no unfunded mandates and students, teachers, and administrators inspired to want to participate -- this would be a great achievement for service and citizenship. Talk about a Kennedy-esque challenge (NY Times, 5/18/97); I think this is it.

Sincerely,


Susan M. Andersen
Professor of Psychology
Director of Graduate Studies
in Psychology

SMA/s

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Sylvia Matthews
Carol Rasco
Bruce Reed
✓Melanne Verveer



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White House Press Release

Radio Address By The President To The Nation

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 5, 1997

Radio Address By The President
To The **Nation**

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. Est

The President: Good morning. I want to talk with you today about how we can make this glorious spring a season of **service** all across America. As I have said many times, the era of big government may be over, but the era of big challenges for our **nation** is surely not. Citizen **service** is the main way we recognize that we are responsible for one another. It is the very American idea that we meet our challenges not through heavy-handed government or as isolated individuals, but as members of a true community, with all of us working together.

On April 27th through 29th, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, we will be convening an historic Presidents' Summit on **Service**. I will be joined by President Bush, General Colin Powell, by every living former president or his representative, by other prominent Americans, including former Hud Secretary Henry Cisneros and Lynda Robb. Every person, business or organization represented at the summit will have already committed to take specific steps to help to serve our children and to rebuild our communities. Our mission is nothing less than to spark a renewed **national** sense of obligation, a new sense of duty, a new season of **service**.

I hope that many activities in the weeks leading up to this wonderful event will make all Americans think about the duty all of us owe to one another. Citizen **service** can take many shapes -- it can mean volunteering nights or on weekends in a religious group or neighborhood association, or devoting full years of your life to **service** like those the Peace Corps or the Jesuit Volunteer Corps members do.

Over the past four years, we have worked to harness this

citizen energy in so many ways. I am especially proud of AmeriCorps, the **national service** program I proposed when I ran for President, that we launched the very next year. Since its creation, 50,000 young people have earned college tuition by serving their communities, with the basic bargain of getting the opportunity to go to college in return for giving something back to their friends and neighbors.

The success of AmeriCorps shows that **service** can help to meet our most pressing social needs, from renewing our cities to protecting our environment, to immunizing poor children, to giving them mentors and someone to look up to. And that **service** often leads to more **service** -- a typical AmeriCorps member trains or recruits a dozen or more community volunteers.

To focus the American people on the importance of this summit and the urgency of **service**, I'll issue a proclamation designating the week of April 13th through 19th as **national service** week in America. During that week, over a million young people will participate in 3,000 events across our **nation**, cleaning up neighborhoods and working with children.

I've asked the thousands of AmeriCorps alumni and returned Peace Corps volunteers to participate as well, reaching out to youth in their communities, speaking in schools, recruiting volunteers and teaching a new generation about the power of **service**. I've very pleased that some of them have joined our Peace Corps Director, Mark Gehran, here with me today.

I hope that they will teach that citizen **service** cannot be a pursuit for just a week or a month, that the ethic of **service** must extend throughout a lifetime. No one is too young to serve, as a recent study by Brandeis University shows -- when you begin to serve at a young age, schoolwork improves and there is a good chance you will continue to serve in the years to come. It's a good habit that's hard to break. And no one is too old to serve, either. But we must find even more ways to encourage our young people to begin to serve.

I'm joined here today by some young men and women from Maryland, along with that State's Lieutenant Governor, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who has been a leader in making Maryland the first state in our **nation** to require that every student perform some **service** as a condition of high school graduation. One of the students meeting with me gathered food and clothing for the needy; another, dyslexic herself, taught disabled students; another tutors young children at a Head Start center.

Today I challenge schools and communities in every state to make **service** a part of the curriculum in high school and even in middle school. There are many creative ways to do this -- including giving students credit, making **service** part of the curriculum, putting **service** on a student's transcript or even requiring it, as Maryland does. This week, the **National Association of Secondary School Principals** agreed to introduce **service** learning to more than 2 million students, and I hope they'll work to find even more creative ways to involve **service**. States and schools, of course, should be free to decide this for themselves. But every young American should be taught the joy and the duty of serving, and should learn it at the moment when it will have the most enduring impact on the rest of their lives.

Two weeks ago, applications went out to high school principals all around our **nation**, inviting them to select a student

in that school who has performed outstanding **service**, thereby making them eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship. Under this new initiative, which we launched last year, our **national** government will put up \$500 for each student if it is matched by local communities. Already, a host of civic organizations -- including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Moose International, the Lions Clubs, the U.S. Jaycees -- have accepted our challenge to work with their local chapters to provide matching funds for these scholarships. And public servants from agencies like the Agriculture Department will continue to work as partners with these schools, sending volunteers to work with teachers and acting as mentors to students.

I hope all of you will join in the spirit of the Presidents' Summit on **Service**, and take part in the **national** week of **service** beginning April 13th. **Service** is in our deepest **national** tradition. Millions of young Americans in my generation were inspired by the call to **service**, issued so often from this very office, by President Kennedy. Now it is up to all of us to take up President Kennedy's challenges -- remembering, as he said, that every person can make a difference, and every person must try.

Thanks for listening.

End

10:12 A.M. Est



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