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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Anne Maguire, Cabinet Affairs  
The White House  
**FROM:** Lisa Bloch, Public Affairs  
Corporation for National Service  
**RE:** Velaida "Cricket" Harris (formerly Shepard)  
**DATE:** June 10, 1996  
**cc:** J. Toscano

---

Velaida "Cricket" Harris is a second-year AmeriCorps member, working with the Friends of the Children AmeriCorps program in Portland, Oregon. Through her work with Friends of the Children, Velaida, 24, mentors eight at-risk children ranging in age from seven to ten years-old. This mentoring involves many things; from making sure the children get to school on time to helping them with homework and cultivating a sense of responsibility.

Velaida used her educational award from her first year as an AmeriCorps member to repay school loans and she will use her second ed award to finish her bachelor's degree in english at Portland State University.

Velaida spoke at the Pacific Rim Economic Conference at Portland State University in June of 1995. She can be reached at Friends of the Children at 503-762-4047. Her voice mail pager number is 503-202-6536.

E X E C U T I V E   O F F I C E   O F   T H E   P R E S I D E N T

14-May-1996 01:42pm

TO:            (See Below)

FROM:        LeeAnn Inadomi  
             Office of Cabinet Affairs

SUBJECT:    National Service Scholarship

In the President's commencement address at Penn State he challenged communities to reward high school students who have done significant community service with a \$500 scholarship and National Service will match that amount.

The Corporation for National Service has put together a team to work on this and 2 other challenges that were in the speech. For now, if you get any calls refer them to Susan Stroud, Director of the Office of Federal Partnerships, at 606-5000 ext 169.

As soon as they have a permanent person she will let us know.

Thanks. Let me know if you have any questions.

Distribution:

TO: Kathryn Higgins  
TO: Stephen B. Silverman  
TO: Kris Balderston  
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TO: Gordon Li  
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Office of PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

CORPORATION  
FOR NATIONAL  
SERVICE

TO: Ann McGuire

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX #: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: J. Toscano Director, Public Affairs

FAX #: (202) 565-2794 TELEPHONE #: (202) 606-5000, Ext. 277

COMMENTS: As you requested

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Getting Things Done.  
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**Michelle Johnson Harvey**  
**African-American female, 36 years-old**  
**Blue Hills Together, Kansas City MO**  
**Laurice Valentine, Project Director (816) 333-2525**

Michelle Johnson Harvey was so proud of her work closing crack houses and ridding her Blue Hills neighborhood of drug dealers that she signed up for a second year of AmeriCorps service. She told President Clinton in a White House swearing in ceremony last September, "I am living proof that AmeriCorps is a good investment for both the community and AmeriCorps members themselves."

The Blue Hills neighborhood in Kansas City has the highest crime rate in entire city - last year over 660 offenses were reported to the police department. Many residents have moved away because of crime and others are too frightened to leave their homes at night or even during the day.

To combat crime and increase public safety, Blue Hills Together was formed as partnership between the YMCA, the Kansas City Police Department and neighborhood leaders. In the past year, Michelle and 27 other AmeriCorps members with Blue Hills Together have helped close 44 crack houses, organized a massive cleanup spanning over 173 blocks, recruited block captains and mobilized over 3,000 community volunteers. Police Chief Steven Bishop credits AmeriCorps members with helping reduce crime by 15%. "AmeriCorps has helped to turn around one of the most troubled parts of our city. The neighborhood has come together, crime is down, and families can use the parks in safety," Bishop says.

Michelle has been a leader in all these efforts. "AmeriCorps members do things police can't do - because they don't have the time, resources and in many cases the trust of the residents. I grew up in Blue Hills and people know me and trust me. When I come to the door, people see a familiar face. That makes it easier for me to recruit volunteers to make our streets safer and close down crack houses."

Michelle is a young mother with two daughters who longed to return to school to become a teacher, just like her mother. AmeriCorps is giving her the opportunity to pursue this dream. As she puts it, "AmeriCorps lets me help someone and help myself at the same time."

*Spoke at AmeriCorps  
Class of '96 Swearing in ceremony  
Oct 1995 - East Room*

# memo

FR: J. TOSCANO  
Director, Public Affairs

TO: EXTERNAL

DT: 4/26/95 RE: our hero (revised)

Brent Bloom, a 23-year old AmeriCorps\*VISTA member from Oklahoma City, was one of the first people into the Murrah Federal Building following the explosion last Wednesday.

Brent, a 23 year old native of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, who joined AmeriCorps in January, took a year off from his pre-med studies at Oklahoma University to serve his community and earn help with college tuition. He has been serving at a day center for homeless people in Oklahoma City.

At 9 a.m., Wednesday, April 19th, Brent heard a deafening explosion from the center, a few blocks away from the federal building. He and his AmeriCorps team immediately drove to the site. Brent let people on the scene know that he is trained in CPR and First Aid, and he led his team members and other volunteers through a maze of melted cars and smoke into the building, and began to help people escape and get medical attention to those who needed it. He reports that there was glass, debris and blood everywhere as he went from floor to floor.

He made his way toward the second floor nursery -- and found a crater in the floor -- which he describes as "looking like a comet had hit." He dug with his hands and anything handy, until the rumor of another bomb cleared the building. He worked until 2 a.m. the next morning helping to set-up the nearby medical stations, carrying supplies for the FBI and FEMA members who arrived on the scene, and working with Feed the Children at a nearby emergency center -- work he has continued every day since. He has also been asking local businesses to supply food and water for the victims and rescue workers, and making sure that it gets to the emergency center.

One of many poignant moments he reports: he recalls looking out of the third floor, over the crater, to an American flag that still waved briskly atop a building across the street.

Brent credits the training he has received and work he has done as an AmeriCorps member with preparing him to "deal with the trauma and sorrow around me."

Brent intends to use the education award he will earn to complete his college education.

*was featured at  
1995 President's  
Service Award ceremony  
in Rose Garden  
Apr-11 1995*

**Denise Lopez**  
**Hispanic female, 22 years-old**  
**Casa Verde Builders, Austin TX**  
**Robert Morgan, Manager (512) 472-3395**

By building energy efficient homes in her Austin neighborhood, Denise Lopez is helping her community and building a better future for herself.

Casa Verde Builders is a hands-on construction training program for at-risk youth that combines education, job training, leadership skills and community service. The program prepares high school dropouts ages 17-25 for the work force by acquiring GEDs and entry level constructions skills. Builders use cutting edge technologies to construct a higher standard of sustainable, energy-efficient houses that are 25% more efficient than conventional construction. That means reduced heating bills for low-income residents.

Last year, AmeriCorps Casa Verde Builders constructed 7 new energy efficient homes and weatherized another 20 homes. The program was recently honored with a Peter F. Drucker Special Recognition Award for innovation.

AmeriCorps member Denise Lopez dropped out of high school at the age of 16 when she was pregnant with her first daughter. In 1993, she tried to get her GED, but was unprepared to handle the strain of caring for two children by herself while attempting to do school work and put food on the table. AmeriCorps has allowed Denise to become independent from AFDC, earn her GED and learn valuable skills that will help her in the workplace. Denise plans to use her education award to study criminal justice at Austin Community College.

"AmeriCorps has helped me accomplish many things. It has given me more self-esteem and I am very self-confident. I've been able to help the people in my neighborhood. I've helped build beautiful energy efficient homes for low income families. Building these homes gives me confidence in myself plus I'm giving back to the community."

*met BC in round table discussion  
on service September<sup>12</sup> 1995  
In Cabinet Room.*

**Phillip Wu**  
**Hispanic/Asian American, 30 years-old**  
**Formerly with Habitat for Humanity in Miami, FL**  
**Now with Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless (404) 230-5000 ext. 132**

An Army veteran educated by the GI Bill, Phillip Wu understands what it means to serve your country and earn help in return. Phillip's experience last year with Habitat for Humanity led him to sign up for a second tour of duty as an AmeriCorps Leader with a homeless project in Atlanta.

AmeriCorps\*Habitat for Humanity is committed to eliminating sub-standard housing and homelessness and to making the need for decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Nationwide 142 AmeriCorps members in eight cities are building and supervising the construction of more than 200 new homes for low income families.

Last year Phillip Wu was a construction supervisor with the Miami Habitat for Humanity project. Building a house using volunteers is a difficult and complex task that can only be accomplished with skilled full-time crew leaders. By recruiting, training, and motivating local volunteers -- from 1,500 college students who came to Miami over Spring Break, to professionals helping on the weekends, to senior citizens pitching in on the afternoons -- Phillip and the 22 AmeriCorps Members on his team were able to complete 50 new homes for working families.

"In AmeriCorps, everybody wins," says Phillip of his national service experience. "I win because I get a clear and concrete skill, I get a direction and purpose, a chance to earn a living, and when I'm done serving, a chance to go to college, a hope for a better life. Habitat wins because they're getting a trained, skilled leader to help them use their volunteers better. Those in need win because they are getting solid homes for themselves and their families. And the community wins because it gets closer from everybody working together."

Phillip is using the skills he developed during his Army and AmeriCorps service to lead other AmeriCorps members who are serving in the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless. AmeriCorps members help homeless people find shelter and employment and tutor homeless families.

*Met President et 1995  
State of the Union (seated  
with First Lady) and et  
Sept 12 1995 roundtable on service  
in Cabinet Room.*

**Donna Shocke**  
**Caucasian female, 29 years-old**  
**SLICE Corps, Simpson County, Kentucky**  
**Mike Huston, Project Director, (502) 586-2804**

A single mother at 17, Donna Shocke was forced to drop out of high school to care for her newborn child. Serving with the AmeriCorps\*SLICE Corps in the schools of Simpson County, Kentucky has given Donna, and the children she tutors, a new chance to succeed in life.

AmeriCorps\*Service Learning Impacting Children's Education (SLICE CORPS) is a unique program focusing substantial resources on a low-income rural community. Twenty-five AmeriCorps Members are teaching reading skills to 122 second through fourth grade students and involving their parents in school-related activities. The short-term goal is crystal clear: raise reading scores by three full grade levels in one year. In the long-term, the program is expected to improve graduation rates, increase job readiness, expand participation in higher education, and increase parental involvement.

This intense one-on-one attention and tutoring has produced dramatic results. On average, students' reading comprehension improved by three grade levels, and 37% improved their comprehension skills by four or more levels. In addition, they have recruited and trained dozens of community members and parents to serve in the schools. Early results from this year's program are equally impressive.

"AmeriCorps gave me the incentive I needed to obtain my GED. In the past 11 years, I had thought about finishing my education, but there never seemed to be a good enough reason until AmeriCorps. I have grown a lot as a person this year. The staff and other Corps Members have helped me a great deal, and in turn I have become a better mother. My children and husband are proud of me and there is a new commitment in our home to the importance of education, especially reading."

*Met President at Sept 12  
1995 roundtable on service  
in Cabinet Room.*

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LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

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FROM: J. Toscano Director, Public AffairsFAX #: (202) 565-2794 TELEPHONE #: (202) 606-5000, Ext. 277

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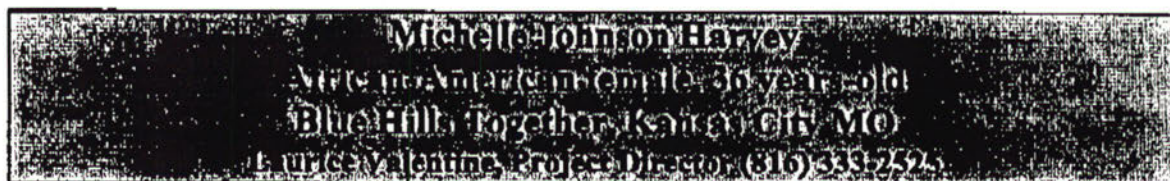
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Please make  
copy and  
deliver to Julia  
Mozzett.

To: Julia  
From: Anne McGuire



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April 1995*



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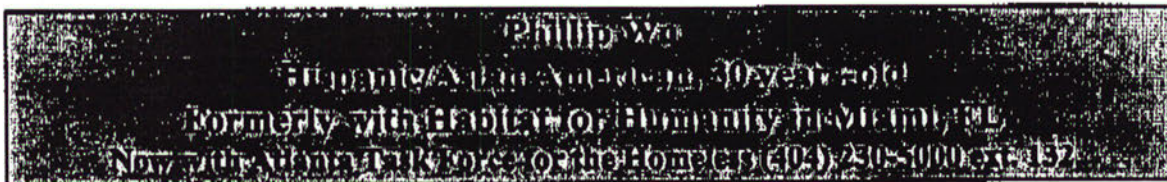
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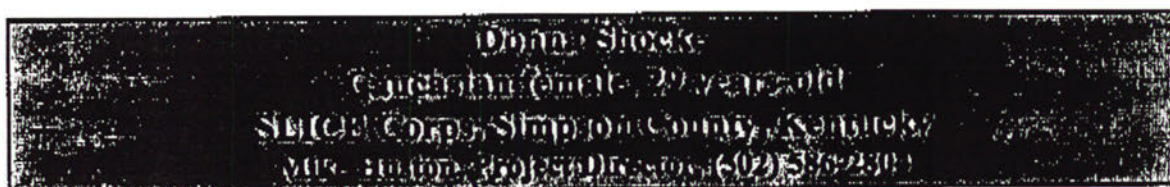
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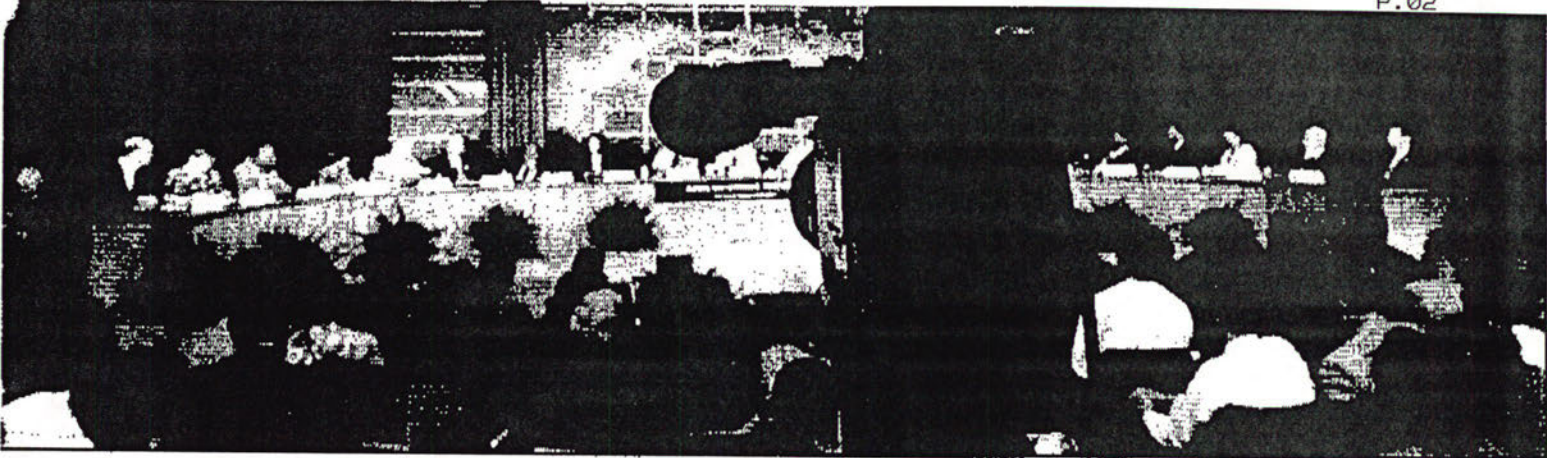
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FAX #: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: J. Toscano Director, Public AffairsFAX #: (202) 565-2794 TELEPHONE #: (202) 606-5000, Ext. 277COMMENTS: Here's the 1st - 2nd bestNUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET) 2

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## THE WORKPLACE

# AmeriCorps gets an emotional boost

A PSU student tearfully recounts how Clinton's service program enabled her to help a youngster

By BILL MacKENZIE

of The Oregonian staff

In an unexpectedly poignant moment, Velaida "Cricket" Shephard brought down the house Tuesday at President Clinton's economic conference.

Turning discussion of education and the workplace from an abstract ideological debate into an emotional real-life story, Shephard told of how AmeriCorps, Clinton's national service program, was helping her turn around a child's life.

Shephard attended Portland State University for 3½ years on an athletic scholarship before joining AmeriCorps to help finance the rest of her education. Calling the program "a blessing," Shephard told of getting up at 6 a.m. every weekday to make sure a young girl in her charge got to school, where the girl has become a role model. Shephard became so involved in the telling of her story that she broke into tears and had to stop.

As the crowd applauded enthusiastically, Clinton asked them, "Do you think this is worth your money?"

AmeriCorps, a featured element of Clinton's education program, is offering financial assistance to 20,000 college students such as Shephard in return for community service. The program is under heavy attack in Congress, where some Republicans want to slash its budget.

But the message of the conference wasn't just that government can make a difference. It also was that the involvement of parents in their children's education is the key to successful students and a strong

economy.

"Mission control is home," said Patricia Baltz, an elementary school teacher from Arcadia, Calif.

"Whether we like it or not, whether by choice or necessity, most parents work, so one of our most important goals in society should be to help people succeed as parents and as workers," Clinton said.

And because home is where children's values are being shaped, parents need to take greater control of the messages their children are receiving from television, Clinton was told.

The media has "bewitched, bothered and bewildered our children" by taking an excessive amount of their time, demeaning them in programming and exploiting them as little more than a market for consumer products, said Diana Meehan, president of Los Angeles-based VU Productions.

Parents need to be advocates for the kind of programming they want their children to see and to protect their children from the sex, violence and negative images spewing from television, Meehan said. "Television is not the real world," she said, "and children don't know that."

But parental involvement in education requires a family friendly government and workplace, speakers said. They supported, for example, government programs that provide an incentive to save, job retraining programs and welfare-to-work programs.

Companies also can help out with day care and allowing time off for school volunteer work, speakers said.



Above: President Clinton appears on a monitor as he listens to panel members Tuesday during the first session of the Pacific Rim Economic Conference at Portland State University. Top left: Portland businessman Bill Naito urges Clinton to negotiate a free trade agreement with Asian nations. Below left: Billy Frank, chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, makes a point about wildlife. Below: Velaida "Cricket" Shephard wipes away tears as she describes how Clinton's AmeriCorps program enabled her to help a young girl become a role model at school. The program also helped Shephard finance her education at Portland State University.

Photos by  
PAUL KITAGAKI JR.  
The Oregonian