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Q and A Forum

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NEECE BENSON WIDING
& ASSOCIATES, INC.

July 26, 1993

put on
emphasis on job train
mailing list
where should it be
filed?

Mr. Eli Segal
Special Assistant to the President and
Director of National Service
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Segal:

Last January at the US Conference of Mayors meeting I had the opportunity to briefly meet you and was impressed with your commitment to City Year and the concept of service corps. I was fortunate to be involved in the early days of launching Philadelphia's program in the mid-1980's and became an advocate of the value of youth service corps to their communities -- and to the participating youth.

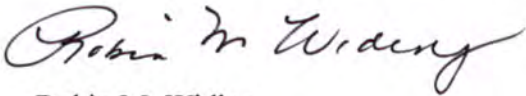
Enclosed is a copy of our company's recent newsletter on Youth Service Corps. We are involved in the employment and training business and wanted to use our newsletter and our relationships with national public interest groups to encourage the development of service corps. This newsletter is based on a recent visit to Philadelphia's program which we organized on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Employment & Training Council. More than 30 people attended from cities across the country to see first-hand how an urban corps operates. Based on that visit several cities are now in the planning stages for developing a service corps in their community. It was again a pleasure promoting Philadelphia's program as it was many years ago when, under former PA Secretary of Labor -- now Senator Wofford, I developed a state-wide marketing guide for PA youth service corps as well as initiating Philadelphia's public relations campaign which later received a local public relations award.

Mr. Eli Segal
Page Two

We applaud your efforts to build a national service program and will continue to stay abreast of the developments from your office and the legislation pending in Congress. We wish you much success. If you would like any additional information on our work with Youth Service Corps, please feel free to contact me at 215.923-4059.

Sincerely,

NEECE BENSON WIDING & ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robin M. Widing".

Robin M. Widing
Partner

cc: Mr. Anthony Fairbanks, Director
Philadelphia Youth Service Corps

Ms. Joan Crigger, Director
Employment & Training, U.S. Conference of Mayors

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The Q & A F O R U M

Published by Neece Benson Widing & Associates, Inc.

YOUTH SERVICE & COMMUNITY CORPS

The Clinton Administration is advocating Community Service Corps as an important strategy for out-of-school youth. The Q & A Forum interviewed Mr. Anthony Fairbanks, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Youth Service Corps to gain his perspective on how to build an effective youth service corps program. Mr. Fairbanks was hired in 1986 to develop the corps program in Philadelphia. He was also the former Chairman of the Board of the National Association of Service & Conservation Corps, a national non-profit corporation dedicated to encouraging the support and growth of service corps across our nation.

CONTEXT:

The Philadelphia Youth Service Corps serves 400 to 500 youth each year through its year round program, summer corps and wilderness challenge programs. It was developed as a "best practice" model and is now being replicated under the \$15 million Urban Corps Expansion project.

Q What are the three or four most critical elements that "set apart" the youth service corps model from other out-of-school youth programs.

A First, our underlying principle is helping youth feel positive about themselves. We want our kids to have a larger vision of who they are -- and to see themselves as successful. We seek to give them not only marketable skills for their future success but help them learn how to give something of themselves -- something back to their community and then ultimately to become a positive role model. We achieve this through a combination of basic skills education, physical training and community projects -- which gives youth the opportunity to make improvements -- often in the communities where they live.

Second, a youth service corps is a highly disciplined program. It requires a significant contribution of time, energy and commitment from each youth who participates in the program. The days are long, the work is hard, and the youth must work in teams with fellow members as well as agreeing to strive to improve their basic education skills.

Q What does a "typical" day look like at the Philadelphia Youth Service Corps?

A The day begins at 7:30 a.m. with a half-hour of physical training designed to develop discipline in both the body and the mind. Corpsmembers (and staff) complete a series of calisthenics and then jog through the historic section of Philadelphia for at least one-half mile. This is followed by an hour-long morning program devoted to citizenship. This is when corpsmembers and staff exchange information and ideas, read and discuss current events and recognize the achievement of individual corpsmembers and work crews.

The balance of the morning is spent at the Learning Center where corpsmembers focus on basic reading, writing and math skills as well as GED and SAT preparation. Much of the curriculum is computer-based, allowing corpsmembers to work at their own pace. Also, each corpsmember sets their own educational goals when they enter the program and are periodically evaluated against their own goals.

The afternoon is devoted to community service projects. Crew leaders supervise each of the projects. Corpsmembers are expected to develop good worksite relations, be able to follow written and oral instructions, use the proper tools, take initiative on the job and produce quality work. We continually reinforce that the work they do on the community projects is not only a reflection on them but it reflects

positively (or negatively) on the entire Philadelphia Youth Service Corps.

Q What is the Wilderness Challenge?

A The Wilderness Challenge is a three-day outdoor retreat for potential corpsmembers. Modeled after Outward Bound, youth engage in a series of personal and team building exercises which emphasizes discipline, hard work, team effort and personal assessment. We have found that the Wilderness Challenge significantly contributes to a young person's ability to successfully transition into the Corps. Many potential corps members drop-out during this phase of the program -- but for those who stay in, the retreat helps them gain an important perspective on themselves and therefore, they are better prepared to adjust to the rigors of the youth service corps program.

CONTEXT:

When the Philadelphia Youth Service Corps began five years ago, it started as a three-year demonstration program with an initial enrollment of 30 youth. Today, more than 750 youth have successfully completed the program.

Q If you were starting up a corps program today, what would you be most concerned about?

A A corps is a much more expensive program than programs typically funded by the employment and training system. It requires that you carefully analyze and plan upfront your financial and organizational needs -- preferably over a two-year time frame. In Philadelphia fundraising for this project was well underway by the corporate community through a city-wide business-led non-profit organization and through the Private Industry Council. Now, in addition to our JTPA and corporate funds, we receive private foundation grants, city funds, and support from federal and state government.

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