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The Associated Press

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June 3, 1992, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 631 words

HEADLINE: Idealistic College Grads Fight to Help Mississippi Schools

BYLINE: By FRANK FISHER, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: JACKSON, Miss.

KEYWORD: Teacher Corps

BODY:

Some of the nation's poorest children will get help when 19 of this country's best and brightest young women and men come to teach for a year.

The Mississippi Teacher Corps may be unique, its administrators say. What isn't unique, especially in this impoverished state, is the struggle to keep the 3-year-old program going.

The Teachers Corps almost didn't survive its second year when state officials withdrew their contribution of \$ 30,000 worth of in-kind services. Charitable foundations stepped in with \$ 85,000, but it's already time to start raising money for next year.

"We're going to have to go out and knock on a lot of foundations' doors," said Charlie Abelmann, special program consultant for Project 95, which runs the Teacher Corps. "The interest is there, the dedication is there, the hard work is there. All we need are the funds."

Mississippi cries out for all the help it can get. The statewide graduation rate is 66.9 percent, 40th worst in the country, according to the Corporation for Enterprise Development in Washington. Adult illiteracy of 16 percent ranks 47th in the nation.

Mississippi has the biggest proportion of people in poverty: 25 percent, or \$ 13,359 average annual income in 1990, according to the Census Bureau.

At the same time, the state is plagued by an acute teacher shortage in high-demand fields such as sciences. Every month, hard-pressed school districts send the state Board of Education some 100 requests for emergency teaching licenses, officials said. Most get turned down.

Now the Teacher Corps is stepping in, with people like Elizabeth Welch.

"I feel I've had a great opportunity to get a good education and in a sense, this is like paying back," said Ms. Welch, 23, of Troy, Va., a recruit

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finishing her master's degree in English at Georgetown University.

"I've been working in New York City's inner city for two years and I thought it would be important to balance this with rural experience," she said in an interview.

Ms. Welch was among 200 applicants from around the country with degrees from prestigious schools, including Harvard, Yale and Stanford.

But scholarly credentials alone weren't enough.

"We were looking for people who could adjust to a rural environment and had lots of extracurricular activities," said Whitney Thompson, who also works at Project 95. The project is a joint venture of the state College Board, Board of Education and Board for Community and Junior Colleges aiming to improve the quality of the state's high school graduates by 1995.

The Teacher Corps enlists instructors in math, reading, science and foreign languages to serve one year in junior and senior high schools. They need not have education degrees.

Before their teaching stints begin, however, the recruits must pass the National Teacher Exam, a subject mastery test and qualify for an alternative teaching certificate during an eight-week seminar at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

Unlike the New York-based Teach for America, which places novice teachers in city and rural areas around the country for two years, the Teacher Corps only serves rural areas. It takes recent graduates and experienced people alike. The average age in the incoming group is the mid-20s and five are Peace Corps veterans.

The pay is about \$ 18,000 for the school year, which begins in August. Most will go to the Mississippi Delta, where after cotton is picked and unemployment hovers around 25 percent.

Recruits are exposed to Delta blues and Southern folklore during an eight-week summer seminar at the University of Mississippi, said Andy Mullins, an assistant to the state superintendent of education.

"That not only gives them a chance to get acclimatized to us, it lets us get acclimatized to them," Mullins said.

13TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Daily Report Card

August 7, 1992

SECTION: FOCUS

LENGTH: 251 words

HEADLINE: BUDGET WOES: TEACHER CORPS MAY FACE SHORTFALL

BODY:

Teach for America is facing the possibility of ending its fiscal year in September with a budget deficit of over \$3M (Millicent Lawton, ED WEEK). As of last month, the national non-profit teach corps had raised only \$3.8M of its \$7M budget for this year, according to T.F.A. officials (See DRC 7/6, #5).

Wendy Kopp, the organization's founder and VP for development Ian Huschle acknowledge the organization's "shaky" financial predicament, but say they are not alarmed, the newspaper reports. "Our financial situation has not readily changed since day 1 -- it's still hand-to-mouth," said Kopp.

Huschle said if the group ends the FY with a significant shortfall, it will have to consider scaling back operations. But some observers are not fazed by the apparent crisis, writes ED WEEK. "We've been worried every year that they've expanded ... and each year they have raised the funds in a kind of 'Perils of Pauline' way," said Joan Lipsitz of the Lilly Endowment, which has given the program \$1.2M in the past.

TFA is considering several strategies to ensure the source of the its long-term operating revenue, according to the newspaper. TFA officials said the organization has placed more emphasis on local and regional donors in areas where corps members teach. It also has been negotiating with a unanimous "'high-volume, consumer-goods company' to develop a cause-related marketing campaign." (8/5)

19TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1992 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

July 7, 1992, Tuesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 1; Column 3; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 1295 words

HEADLINE: GETTING THEIR CHANCE TO TRY OUT TEACHING;
EDUCATION: INNOVATIVE PROGRAM RECRUITS TEACHERS FOR NATION'S MOST-BELEAGUERED SCHOOLS.

BYLINE: By CHARISSE JONES, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Greg Goodworth put medical school on the back burner in 1990 and instead committed two years of his life to teaching in an East Los Angeles high school.

While there, he saw instructors forced to buy their own classroom supplies -- staples like chalk, paper and markers -- after the Los Angeles Board of Education cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the school district budget. He met and listened to veteran teachers who were bitter at a system they said placed all the ills of public education on their backs.

Yet, despite such trying conditions, Goodworth has decided to remain in the profession.

"I love the kids," he said simply. "With everything that's so wrong with teaching, I think there's very few jobs where you can get such gratification from what you do."

Goodworth is an inaugural member of Teach for America, a program founded in 1989 by Princeton University graduate Wendy Kopp to recruit college graduates to teach in the nation's most-beleaguered rural and urban schools.

Last week, the program's first class, which started in 1990, held a reunion at Cal State Northridge and welcomed more than 1,000 newer recruits who have committed themselves to carrying out the program's premise that every child in America can learn and deserves the opportunity to do so.

Of the original group, 170 recruits were assigned to the Los Angeles Unified School District and completed their two-year commitment. Goodworth is one of 117 in the district who have chosen to stay in the field.

Teach for America's initial class had 489 members, with 60% deciding to continue in teaching.

"We think these young folks coming in are really the future for our young people," said Donnalyn Jaque-Anton, the district's director of professional development. "They're in teaching because they want to be. They see it as a creative, thought-provoking, innovative profession, which it is."

Others in Teach for America's original class have decided to go back to graduate school, try other jobs or work on the program's staff, where they

Los Angeles Times, July 7, 1992

will devise ways to reform education and attract talented young people to the teaching profession.

But whether they have decided to leave or stay, many agree that during the past two years they have learned at least as much as they taught.

Goodworth realized, for example, how difficult teaching can be. "I thought it was one of the easiest jobs around," the 23-year-old Pittsburgh native said. "You never know how hard it is until you get into the game."

By the end of his two years teaching science at Roosevelt High School, Goodworth had suffered through one of the worst fiscal crises the Los Angeles district has ever faced. He endured increases in class size -- "(Try) to manage 40 students by yourself when you've never been in that kind of situation before" -- and a spending freeze on class supplies.

Like many instructors, he used his own money at least twice a week to stock his classroom with everything from yarn to glue to pencils. And if he didn't occasionally put paper on his shopping list, his students would have been forced to share assignments in class, unable to take a copy home.

Goodworth and other faculty members are bracing for yet another round of massive reductions in the wake of \$400 million in spending cuts imposed for the 1992-93 school year.

"It makes you feel helpless," he said of the reductions. "There's nothing you can do, (and) next year is going to be unbearable."

Despite the hardships, Goodworth said he will be back at Roosevelt next year. "There are definitely times you come home and you feel fed up with everything," he said, "but the next day's a new day and it only seems to get better."

Emilio Gonzales is less optimistic. A teacher at Vermont Avenue Elementary School, Gonzales plans to return to the school. But, he said firmly, "this will be my last year."

It's not that he didn't gain something valuable from the experience. Gonzales said he has met many dedicated teachers and in particular is glad to see the district make multicultural education a priority.

But there are other problems. His school, too, has suffered from the district's fiscal difficulties. And he has felt the budget cuts in his own paycheck.

"I'm leaving the profession because, as rewarding as it is, you're not valued," said Gonzales, a Los Angeles native and a graduate of Columbia University. "I don't understand how they expect professional people to come (into the field) if they're not going to pay them a professional salary."

In 1990, the annual salary for Teach for America recruits working in the Los Angeles district was about \$29,500, though budget problems later forced them to take the same 3% pay cut as all other district employees.

Gonzales said he understands that money should not be the driving reason behind teaching. He entered the Teach for America corps because of a high

Los Angeles Times, July 7, 1992

school English teacher who went out of his way to help him do well in life.

"He forced me to apply to good schools and spent a lot of personal time with me," Gonzales said of the instructor, who died last year. "I came from a low-income, single-parent home. It wasn't until high school I got turned on to learning.

"I'm not saying money is the reason to get into education," Gonzales said. "But I'm being realistic. A gifted, talented teacher is going to look elsewhere" if the pay is inadequate.

Many corps members said their classroom experiences gave them insights into themselves. Furman Brown, for example, became aware of his own prejudices, and how to cast them away.

"I always thought of myself as a liberal person," said Brown, who studied education in graduate school at UC Berkeley and taught at Normandie Avenue Elementary School in South Los Angeles, where the students are predominantly Latino and black. But "I learned I, too, had a lot of racial biases. That was valuable."

He discovered that stereotypes about poor, minority families not caring about their children were untrue. He saw firsthand that parents of all ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds were interested in the education of their children.

Brown also observed how much the Los Angeles school district needs bilingual instructors willing to teach in poorer sections of the city. The first day of school he found himself thrust into a bilingual fifth-grade class even though he does not speak Spanish. His aide was not fluent in either English or Spanish.

So Brown found it difficult to communicate with many of his students and their parents. If he was having a discipline problem with an African-American child, "I wouldn't hesitate to go to their home and work with the parents," he said. "But if it was a Latino child, it was difficult. I felt there was a huge barrier between us because of language."

Ultimately, he got by. "You wound up depending on the kids," Brown said. He had the children sit in groups instead of rows and assist one another with assignments as well as in translating lessons. And he did meet with some of the Latino parents, although because of the language gap the conferences sometimes took a long time to arrange.

Brown says he remains dedicated to teaching. But he will not immediately return to the classroom.

"I busted my butt the last two years, and yet my children will still score in the bottom 10th or 20th percentile (on standardized tests)," Brown said. "I'm working too hard for that. My school is full of teachers that care, but they are also teachers who are tired."

Instead he will work in the professional development arm of Teach for America, looking at ways to reorganize the country's schools.

Los Angeles Times, July 7, 1992

"I want to be involved in that part," Brown said, "so when I go back to the classroom I'll have every possibility (of) reaching those children."

GRAPHIC: Photo, For Gred Goodworth, teaching brings its own personal rewards.
CON KEYES / Los Angeles Times; Photo, FINDING TEACHERS: A program is making inroads in recruiting beginning teachers, such as Emilio Gonzales, above, in the nation's most-beleaguered schools.

SUBJECT: TEACHERS -- LOS ANGELES; TEACH FOR AMERICA (ORGANIZATION); EDUCATION REFORM; LOS ANGELES -- EDUCATION; LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

20TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Daily Report Card

July 6, 1992

SECTION: BETTER SCHOOLS

LENGTH: 404 words

HEADLINE: TEACH FOR AMERICA'S HIGH HOPES: HAVE THEY BEEN MET?

BODY:

Teach for America founder Wendy Kopp proclaimed that her program would "change the way teachers are recruited and trained" at the birth of her brainchild (Chira, NY TIMES) (see DRC 3/25, #8). Two years later, many are asking if TFA has met those expectations.

The TIMES reports the attrition rate for TFA teachers was "about half," which is higher than the national average for beginning teachers, but "only somewhat higher than the rate common in the tough schools" where TFA members are placed.

According to the TIMES, the "very existence of teachers' colleges ... that fail to prepare teachers for classroom reality" was challenged by TFA. But the program faced similar complaints of inadequate training and support from its young recruits. In response, TFA has "redesigned its eight-week summer training institute .. and has reorganized its regional offices to make sure teachers are no longer isolated," writes the TIMES.

TFA enthusiasts laud it as an "ingenious way to lure into teaching" the best and the brightest. CA Supt. of Public Instruction Bill Honig: "Any source that gets people who aren't normally going to think about education to come in is a great help and boon."

Critics, however, attack the program as "at best a Band-Aid, at worst a disservice to children who deserve more experienced and better trained teachers." Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor at Teachers College of Columbia U labeled TFA a "temporary solution" that will not "solve the problems of American inner-city teaching." And Betty Steward, principal of a CA elementary school that employed six TFA teachers said the program's "greatest weakness" is the amount of staff development put into young teachers who may leave after their two-year commitment so that "you have to start all over."

Darling-Hammond suggested making the first year of the two-year commitment to TFA an internship that "gradually allow(s) new teachers to take on more tasks ... under supervision ... from veteran teachers." But nearly all TFA teachers interviewed said they "would not have signed up for a program that did not allow them to take charge of their own classrooms."

According to the TIMES, TFA is funded by several sources, including unannounced presidential candidate Ross Perot (7/6).

22ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The New York Times

July 6, 1992, Monday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 1945 words

HEADLINE: Idealism Vies With Failures In an Experiment in Teaching

BYLINE: By SUSAN CHIRA

BODY:

It is the season of reckoning for Teach for America, the program that two years ago dispatched nearly 500 top college graduates to teach in the most troubled schools in America.

The first group's two-year commitment is up, and the program now faces expectations raised by its sudden fame: can a small corps of bright and idealistic people with little training help change American education?

The tale of Teach for America, an idea hatched in a senior thesis and brought to life in a single year by a young woman just out of college, captivated many Americans with its overtones of idealism and pluck.

Provoking Intense Debate

Now some results are in. About half of the teachers plan to stay in the beleaguered schools they served, an attrition rate far higher than the national average for beginning teachers, but only somewhat higher than the rate common in the tough schools where the members of Teach for America were placed. Nearly one-third left before their two-year stints were up. But 69 percent say they will stay in education-related fields, and most say they will bring to whatever careers they pursue an invaluable firsthand knowledge of educational wrongs and a passion to right them.

Still, Wendy Kopp, Teach for America's 25-year-old founder, had sketched out a more ambitious goal, that of changing the way teachers are recruited and trained. And now that Teach for America has survived its first years, its very existence is provoking an intense debate about whether her approach is the right way to produce teachers for children in the most desperate need of the best teaching.

Some hail the program as an ingenious way to lure into teaching those in shortest supply: top students who usually choose other higher-paying, higher-status jobs. Many members of the first Teach for America group have postponed or given up careers in law, medicine or business.

"Any source that gets people who aren't normally going to think about education to come in is a great help and boon," said Bill Honig, California's Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Others dismiss Teach for America as at best a Band-Aid, at worst a disservice to children who deserve more experienced and better-trained

The New York Times, July 6, 1992

teachers.

"It's a temporary solution," said Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor at Teachers College at Columbia University. "The contribution they make is useful in some circumstances sometimes, but it's not going to solve the problems of American inner-city teaching."

These very problems, violence, drugs, poverty, administrative callousness and deadening bureaucracy, form the most vivid memories and enduring challenges for the teachers, many of whom gathered in Los Angeles this weekend to compare notes on how best to surmount the obstacles they found.

Problems Challenge The New Teachers

"Every day I wanted to quit, and every day I wanted to teach for the rest of my life," said JoAnne Ruvoli, who taught in South-Central Los Angeles. "It's such a roller coaster."

Some clung to their own successes as signs of hope. Travis Jackson, who taught in Boys and Girls High School in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, remembers the girl who had no plans to go to college. But he wrote to colleges to send her applications, coached and prodded her, and she won admission to Howard University.

In Fort Greene, also in Brooklyn, Iris Chen had a student who showed up unwashed and quickly became the butt of her classmates' cruelty. But when Ms. Chen encouraged her to write poetry, she blossomed and ended the year the star of the class play.

Amparo Gonzalez, who taught in Harlem, said, "The most important thing I got out of the whole experience was that the children I worked with can definitely learn and succeed, regardless of how painful, traumatic or wonderful their lives may be." Mr. Gonzalez has been recruited to teach next year at Central Park East Secondary School in East Harlem, an innovative alternative high school.

Other teachers felt stymied and overwhelmed, worried that their efforts paled in the face of an unresponsive and indifferent system. Mary Stechschulte spent two frustrating years at Junior High School 117 in Bedford-Stuyvesant, all but marooned on the third floor, known around the school as the floor to avoid.

She said the man who was supposed to supervise her announced: "I'm going to do as little as possible. I'm getting back at the system." She tried to organize field trips for students who had never ventured far out of their neighborhoods. But the same man, after having collected half the students' admission fees to an amusement park, arrived two hours late with the money, stranding her with children whose disappointment approached hysteria.

Many teachers are wrestling themselves with the most common criticism leveled at Teach for America: in the long run, can a small influx of bright people make enough of a difference? There are 2.3 million teachers in America; Teach for America will have about 1,400 teachers in the fall.

More broadly, some teachers question whether Teach for America has done enough to address larger social problems. "I'm telling kids, 'Work really hard all your life, and you'll have a decent, O.K. life,' but someone across town

The New York Times, July 6, 1992

has a hundred, a thousand times as much," said Jonathan Schorr, who taught in Pasadena, Calif. "I really question whether a kid buys into this. I don't know if I would."

Founder Sees Hope In Life of Group

But Ms. Kopp says that as an organization that lives beyond individual teachers' stints of two or more years, Teach for America can change education. "I feel as if we now have a model which could have a real impact on the ways that all beginning teachers in this country are recruited, selected, trained and supported," she said.

This fall, Teach for America will expand to 12 sites around the country that have chronic teacher shortages and will accept teachers without certificates. What began as a one-woman operation now has 70 employees in more than a dozen offices.

Among the workers are veteran teachers, who are often retired and support the new teachers in schools by making allies of principals and acting as mentors. They are paid \$35,000, and other employees receive \$25,000, with a \$2,500 raise each year. Ms. Kopp now earns \$32,500.

Ms. Kopp said that she had raised \$3.8 million so far toward a projected \$7 million budget, but that she was waiting to hear about several grants that might balance her budget. The group has received substantial grants, including ones from the Lilly Endowment, Philip Morris Companies and Ross Perot, the unannounced Presidential candidate.

In essence, Teach for America challenges the very existence of teachers colleges, long criticized as offering irrelevant, watered-down courses that fail to prepare teachers for classroom reality. Most teachers still major in education and earn teaching certificates required for permanent posts. A smaller group enters through alternative routes like Teach for America and must earn certificates by taking courses at teachers colleges while they work. Ms. Kopp and virtually all of two dozen Teach for America teachers interviewed said that rather than giving teachers years of training before they started it was more important to work with them after they began.

To that end, Ms. Kopp said, Teach for America is working with school districts in rural North Carolina and in Baltimore to develop new ways for teachers to earn teaching certificates. Instead of just requiring courses at local teachers colleges, this approach would ask teachers to demonstrate that they can meet certain standards of good teaching.

In response to complaints from its own teachers about inadequate training and support, Teach for America has completely redesigned its eight-week summer training institute along these lines, and has reorganized its regional offices to make sure teachers are no longer isolated.

But teacher educators say that even if some education schools are bad, the best do offer prospective teachers essential knowledge, for example, how to teach children with learning disabilities, which reduces the risk that teachers will fail their students.

Debate Continuing On Good Teaching

The New York Times, July 6, 1992

Professor Darling-Hammond proposes that Teach for America should make the first year an internship and gradually allow the new teachers to take on more tasks. "Teach for America should allow teachers to come in as interns, not yet full-fledged teachers, under supervision and intensive support from veteran teachers so that as they're learning, they're not doing it at the expense of children," she said.

Nearly all the teachers interviewed said they would not have signed up for a program that did not allow them to take charge of their own classrooms. While most felt unprepared and faulted the program's initial training, they said the alternatives were worse in schools that were short of veteran teachers anyway. They all praised experienced teachers whose flair had humbled them, but they also said they felt many new teachers who had graduated with degrees in education were no better than they were.

"Some teachers in the school who'd been in the system a long time were not doing anything, and anybody would be better than those teachers," said Sara Mosle, who taught in Washington Heights in Manhattan but left after a year to become a freelance journalist. "People discuss education as if we lived in a perfect world. Who's living in that world?"

It is not clear how many of the Teach for America teachers emerged from their two years as good teachers. Professor Darling-Hammond said she has talked to supervisors in New York City who say that while some did fairly well, others were dismissed for incompetence. Teach for America said of the 489 teachers who started out two years ago, 5 were dismissed for poor teaching and 9 for reasons that included poor teaching.

Of the teachers who began in 1990, 342 completed two years, a 30 percent attrition rate. Of those who completed the program, 60 percent plan to continue in teaching. Nationwide, 12.2 percent of teachers leave after their second year of teaching, according to Mary Rollefson, a survey statistician with the National Center for Education Statistics. But teacher turnover rates in the districts where Teach for America teachers were placed are from 25 percent to 50 percent, the program said.

"These are very, very bright young people, and they bring a lot of skills and talent," said Betty Steward, principal of Highland Elementary School in California's Inglewood Unified School District, who had six Teach for America teachers in the last two years. "But the program's greatest weakness is that you're putting a lot of staff development time in, and when they stay two years and leave, you have to start all over."

Ms. Kopp and several other teachers said that they believed that even the 40 percent of the teaching corps who have left teaching altogether did so with a lifelong commitment to educational issues. Doug Whitney, a Yale University graduate who taught in rural North Carolina, will join a foundation there to try to channel money toward under-financed school districts.

Michael Lach, who taught in New Orleans, is returning to graduate school to get a degree in physics education.

"It's such a powerful experience, I can't see it not changing the situation in some ways," he said. "I didn't know how bad these schools were or how much help these kids needed until I was there. If my fellow corps members achieve

The New York Times, July 6, 1992

some positions of prominence, they will know something of the inner city. I know it will have some effect."

GRAPHIC: Photo: "Every day I wanted to quit, and every day I wanted to teach for the rest of my life," said JoAnne Ruvoli, who taught in South-Central Los Angeles as part of the Teach for America program. (Bart Bartholomew for The New York Times)

SUBJECT: EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS; TEACHERS AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

ORGANIZATION: TEACH FOR AMERICA

NAME: CHIRA, SUSAN

GEOGRAPHIC: UNITED STATES

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March 27, 1992, Friday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 1; Column 1; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 2767 words

HEADLINE: COLUMN ONE;

ANSWER TO IDEALISM OR JOBLESSNESS;

VOLUNTEER AGENCIES ARE SEEING A SURGE OF INTEREST FROM COLLEGE SENIORS. FOR SOME STUDENTS IT'S A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE ME DECADE. FOR OTHERS, IT'S MOSTLY THE PATH TO A PAYCHECK.

BYLINE: By BARRY M. HORSTMAN and JENNIFER TOTH, TIMES STAFF WRITERS

BODY:

When he graduated from Northwestern University and fulfilled his Navy ROTC obligation, Marty Siewert did not anticipate that he would spend seven months unemployed, soberly pondering the real-world value of his college degree and military experience.

Discouraged and "just about to get panicky" over his job search, Siewert finally landed with a federal poverty-fighting program in Hollywood where, paradoxically, he tries to help others find employment.

"I've always been interested in social service, so this is a good opportunity to get a better feel for it," said Siewert, sitting in the small, cluttered office from which he finds temporary jobs for teen-age runaways and homeless youths in an effort to get them off the streets. "Plus, with the economy the way it is, I feel lucky to be working here -- or anywhere."

Emblematic of a rise in volunteerism among college-age individuals that blends idealism with economic realities, Siewert recently began a one-year enlistment in Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), the Great Society-era federal agency dedicated to alleviating domestic poverty.

A stagnant economy, changing attitudes toward volunteer work and heightened interest in world events have given organizations such as VISTA, the Peace Corps and Teach for America a higher profile on college campuses, generating applications at an unparalleled rate.

In the first week of January, for example, the Peace Corps' Washington telephone lines were jammed with so many calls -- nearly 900 a day at one point -- that the system broke down, according to Mike Berning, the agency's director of recruitment. At the same time last year, the Peace Corps' information hot line drew 150 to 200 calls a day, Berning added.

The flood of young applicants eager for public service contradicts common assumptions about the supposed apathy of the twentysomething generation, conjuring up images of predecessors who responded to President John F. Kennedy's "ask what you can do for your country" exhortation in the 1960s.

Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1992

"College students are a lot more idealistic than the media give them credit for," said Teach for America founder Wendy Kopp, whose program recruits graduates who majored in fields other than education to spend two years teaching in needy school districts.

Volunteerism, seen at best in recent years as a well-intentioned diversion from the fast track, is being increasingly viewed by college students as a logical entry point into the workplace instead of the postponement of a career.

"For me, this wasn't a case of putting off the corporate world -- it was a matter of choosing a job where I could work for social change," said Eric Verhoogen, a Teach for America member who teaches mathematics at an inner-city Los Angeles high school.

Hundreds of other college students are making the same choice, underlining that commitment through their willingness to work for poverty-level salaries, often in drab, undesirable surroundings, in emotionally and professionally challenging jobs where psychic income is the dominant currency.

Siewert, for example, works out of a run-down Los Angeles Free Clinic office where the institutional dreariness is relieved only slightly by a view of the famous Hollywood sign. Because VISTA workers earn less than minimum wage -- an average of \$610 monthly, supplemented by a \$95-per-month payment upon completion of service -- he shares an apartment with another VISTA volunteer in a high-crime neighborhood.

A husky 26-year-old Milwaukee native with a soft-spoken manner and ready smile, Siewert seeks to persuade public and private employers to hire runaways and homeless youths between the ages of 16 and 23 -- a formidable task, given business's reluctance to depend on troubled individuals with little in their present circumstances to justify confidence.

Most of the jobs offered are light labor or low-level clerical positions, though one unusual success story saw a homeless 20-year-old gain a bit part in "The Wonder Years" television show. Youths may participate in the program for a maximum of four months, and while that is sufficient time for some to begin turning around their lives, it is only a brief respite from the streets for others.

"The satisfaction is seeing some people gain stability in their lives, but the frustration is realizing it's very difficult to help a lot of them," Siewert said. "Still, every day, you feel like you have a chance to make a difference. You don't get that with many jobs."

VISTA officials say that is exactly what their agency offers to recruits.

Often referred to as the "domestic Peace Corps," VISTA is seeing a surge in sign-ups on college campuses, in part because of a nationwide recruitment effort by the agency, its first in a decade. Hoping to capitalize on the growing receptivity to volunteerism on campuses, VISTA won congressional funding to hire nine regional recruiters, each of whom will target five campuses -- and visit many others -- in a drive that could bring in hundreds of recruits.

Recent visits to campuses in Los Angeles, Claremont and San Diego produced recruiting dividends, as VISTA staffers had no difficulty luring applicants

Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1992

for low-paying positions in programs that deal with homelessness, drug abuse, hunger and unemployment -- and that often require out-of-state moves to work among society's poorest and neediest.

College students already account for a growing share of VISTA's 3,300-member volunteer force -- about 240 of whom work in California -- increasing from 11% in 1989 to 15% last year. People 55 and older make up another 20%, as do people without college degrees between 18 and 27. The remainder of the volunteers are widely distributed among other age groups.

During its 2 1/2-year-history, Teach for America also has struck a responsive chord on college campuses. When news of its establishment hit campuses in 1990, the organization received 2,500 applications for 500 positions. Last year, it had 3,100 applications and accepted 700 people, about 90% of them recent college graduates.

"There are so many (college) seniors wandering around absolutely unhappy with their options," said Kopp, a 24-year-old Princeton graduate who developed the idea in a senior thesis. "They want to pursue an agenda they believe in and they want to make a difference."

Kopp's inspiration for Teach for America came at a 1988 San Francisco meeting dealing with ways to improve the nation's educational system. Her subsequent 170-page thesis laid out the framework for a privately funded, nonprofit program designed to alleviate persistent teacher shortages in inner cities and rural areas.

In contrast to the subsistence allowances received by VISTA and Peace Corps workers, Teach for America volunteers are paid normal starting teacher salaries by local schools, ranging from \$15,000 in rural Arkansas to \$29,000 in Los Angeles. Several dozen major corporations, such as Mobil and Citicorp, have donated financing to cover the organization's operating costs.

Even so, the teacher salaries are hardly substantial, and the primary appeal for Teach for America applicants is the challenge of tackling difficult urban and rural assignments.

"There's a real esprit de corps atmosphere," said Darrell Barker, an elementary school teacher in South-Central Los Angeles. "It gives teaching an esteem that makes it exciting."

At the Peace Corps, meanwhile, the pendulum's swing back toward volunteerism has been fueled by enthusiasm over serving in former Communist Bloc nations. Over the next year, the Peace Corps plans to open 250 to 500 field positions in the Commonwealth of Independent States, formerly the Soviet Union.

In 1991, the 30-year-old organization waded through 13,735 applications to fill just 3,800 trainee positions. Three months into 1992, the Peace Corps already has 1,100 more applicants than at this time last year and expects to surpass 1991's figure by at least 3,000.

The Peace Corps draws about 45% of its volunteers from people 50 or older, largely because of foreign nations' requests for experienced business professionals and environmental experts, according to recruiter Berning. But about 30% of the agency's 6,000 field positions are filled with people between

Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1992

23 and 28, and Peace Corps officials stress that needs and limited slots, not a lack of young applicants, are behind the aging of its staff.

Public Allies: The National Center for Careers in Public Life, which was formed last year, also is proving popular among young people. Its founder and executive director in Washington, 27-year-old Venessa Kirsch, plans to help place college graduates in organizations confronting such social concerns as the environment, child poverty, homelessness and campaign reform. For example, the center hopes to eventually assign recruits to organizations such as the Sierra Club, Common Cause and the Children's Defense Fund as well as to local shelters for runaway youths or abused women.

With only about 90 slots in Washington, Chicago and Helena, Mont., to fill this year, it already has received hundreds of inquiries -- at a time when center officials still are soliciting contributions from corporations and individuals.

"We're hoping to prevent problems, not just deal with them," Kirsch said. "We're going after people who want to volunteer but are sick of working at homeless shelters every week and not feeling that what they're doing is making a difference."

From the perspective of some top federal administrators, the volunteer agencies' resurgence on campus is seen as a return to 1960s-style idealism after the self-absorption of the Me Decade of the 1980s, when college graduates felt compelled to land high-paying jobs and quickly move up career ladders.

"The shortage of jobs certainly is pushing some students in this direction," said Don Stewart, a spokesman for ACTION, an umbrella organization that oversees domestic volunteer programs. "But you also need the idealism to be there, and we've certainly seen volunteerism increasing on campuses."

While federal officials speak glowingly of the "revived spirit of volunteerism," some recent applicants emphasize that theirs is an idealism born largely of economic necessity.

"This isn't a '60s thing for me -- I'm not a neo-hippy," said USC senior Beth Lipton, a journalism major whose bleak job prospects have led her to consider joining VISTA. "I'm interested in doing something about literacy, but I'm also interested in finding a job. If you've got a job for me, I'll skip VISTA. . . . But I know people with master's (degrees) driving taxis. So I'm trying to be flexible."

Similarly, Kristin Larson, a Pomona College senior, explained that the shock of seeing dozens of homeless people sleeping on the streets in Washington prompted her to consider signing up for VISTA. But she quickly added: "With the job situation being so scary, my idealism might leave, and I'd probably go for the money if I get a job offer."

Anita Fuchslocher, a Teach for America kindergarten teacher in Los Angeles, admits being relieved when she was accepted by the program and no longer had to worry about overcoming difficult economic conditions in New England, where she went to college and where her family lives.

Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1992

"I saw so many friends having trouble finding good jobs that I was really worried," she said. "So I was happy when this came along."

Even VISTA Director Patricia Rodgers in Washington detects a difference between the save-the-world idealism that drove many of the agency's volunteers in the 1960s and the attitudes of current campus applicants.

"There's a pragmatism that comes along with the idealism today," Rodgers said. "People still want to accomplish something. But they're not seeking to achieve the impossible. The attitude perhaps is a little more practical and realistic than what you found in the '60s."

This brand of pragmatic compassion common among recruits is typified by VISTA volunteer Douglas May, who recently began working at Los Angeles' Chrysalis project in a job-development program for the unemployed.

"I'm basically very, very conservative, so I'm skeptical about a lot of government programs," May said. "But I like the idea of putting a federally paid volunteer in the hands of a private nonprofit organization. That's much more effective."

Ironically, while job shortages have drawn many college students to the doorstep of volunteer agencies, they also make some potential recruits hesitant to enlist. Kimberly Kilgour, Pomona College's acting director of career development, said their fear is that by the time they emerge from the programs the "job market could get worse."

For many volunteers, however, altruistic motivations override economic concerns.

Some even bypass lucrative private-sector alternatives, as did Jameson Hill, a 27-year-old Teach for America instructor in rural Louisiana who passed up a job in international banking to follow in the footsteps of an inspirational teacher.

"I wanted to help people the way she helped me," Hill said of a high school French teacher who "made learning fun and exciting."

The two became close friends, and years later, when Hill applied for the Teach for America program, the teacher wrote one of his letters of recommendation. What prevents the story from having a completely happy ending is that, about a week before Hill learned that he had been accepted, his former teacher died of cancer.

"She's a big reason why I'm here," Hill said. "She helped me see the joy of helping others and the value of working to improve the future."

William Baldwin, a USC senior contemplating several volunteer options, added that many students are "learning that there's more to being satisfied than making \$50,000, \$60,000 a year."

"The '80s showed us that those values may be satisfying in the short run," Baldwin said. "But eventually they go belly up. These programs have a lasting value that isn't going to disappear."

Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1992

Pay and Opportunities Vary for Volunteers

Here is what some of the volunteer agencies offer:

PEACE CORPS: Peace Corps volunteers, who must be at least 18 years old, serve overseas in grass-roots development. The majority of volunteers serve in education. Other programs include small business development, environment, community development, health and nutrition. The Peace Corps was founded by Congress under President John F. Kennedy in 1961.

Length of Service: Two years plus three months of training in the country of service.

Positions: An estimated 6,000. Available spots are determined by congressional funding.

Applications: 4,467 so far this year, with about 16,000 expected. Applications are accepted at any time.

Pay: Volunteers receive varying stipends each month, according to how much a local person would make. It is roughly \$150 a month. Upon completion of service, volunteers receive a readjustment allowance of \$4,800.

How to reach them: Peace Corps of the United States

1990 K St., N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20526

Phone: 1-800-424-8580 ext. 2293

VISTA: Volunteers, 18 years or older, serve in low-income U.S. communities full time, with a commitment helping people improve their own lives. VISTA was founded by Congress under President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964.

Length of Service: 1 year.

Positions: An estimated 3,300. Available spots are determined by congressional funding.

Applications: Figures unavailable. Applications are accepted at any time.

Pay: VISTA volunteers average \$610 a month. At the completion of service, volunteers receive \$95 for each month served.

How to reach them: VISTA Recruitment

1100 Vermont Ave., N.W.

Washington, D.C. 10525

Phone: 1-800-424-8867

TDD Phone: (202) 606-5256.

Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1992

TEACH FOR AMERICA: Teach for America is a national corps of teachers who teach in inner cities and remote rural public schools. Volunteers do not need teaching credentials but they do need an undergraduate degree. They must also take 14 units toward teaching credits at nearby colleges and universities (with free tuition) during their period of service. The idea for the service was developed in the fall of 1989, based on a senior thesis written by Princeton University student Wendy Kopp.

Length of Service: Two years.

Positions: Between 500-700 openings this year.

Applications: About 3,000 are expected. Applications are taken in January.

Pay: Salaries range from \$15,000 to \$29,000, depending on the district in which teachers are placed. The salaries are paid by schools.

How to reach them: Teach for America

P.O. Box 5114

New York, N.Y. 10185

Phone: 1-800-832-1230

GRAPHIC: Photo, Rachel Carr of the Teach for America program in her kindergarten classroom in New York. Associated Press; Photo, Class Action: More and more college students are volunteering for such federal programs as VISTA and Teach for America. A Column One report. Above, Anita Fuchslocher, a Teach for America volunteer, with kindergartners at Menlo Avenue Elementary School in Los Angeles. ; Photo, Teach for America worker Anita Fuchslocher with Menlo Avenue Elementary School class. ROSEMARY KAUL / Los Angeles Times; Photo, COLOR, (Orange County Edition) Anita Fuchslocher teaches kindergartners in Los Angeles. ROSEMARY KAUL / Los Angeles Times; Chart, Pay and Opportunities Vary for Volunteers, ANDERS RAMBERG / Los Angeles Times

TYPE: Non Dup; Infobox; List

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA; PEACE CORPS; TEACH FOR AMERICA (ORGANIZATION); VOLUNTEERS; COLLEGE STUDENTS; EMPLOYEE RECRUITING; TEACHING

45TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The New York Times

January 12, 1992, Sunday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section 1; Part 1; Page 13; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 670 words

HEADLINE: TEACHER PROGRAM IS GIVEN A BOOST

BYLINE: By MICHEL MARRIOTT

BODY:

For much of its two-and-one-half-year history, Teach for America, a national not-for-profit teacher training and placement organization, has managed to exist by balancing its members' youthful energy and idealism against a shoestring budget.

All the while, the organization searched for some of America's most promising college graduates, many of whom never considered working in education, to teach in some of the least promising corners and crossroads in the country.

But in recent weeks, Wendy Kopp, the group's 24-year-old founder, appears to have gained success in raising money while also raising her organization's national reputation for trying to invigorate the ranks of teachers.

On Thursday, Teach for America received its largest single donation yet, a \$3 million grant from Philip Morris Companies. At the same time, Ms. Kopp announced that Teach for America was adding Baltimore to its roster of 10 sites. With 50 teachers planned for Baltimore, the group will have 1,150 teachers working.

Plans for Expansion

In addition, the group plans to expand and place members in public schools in rural Tennessee and the District of Columbia this fall, Ms. Kopp said at a reception high in the Pan Am Building overlooking midtown Manhattan.

"Our problem has been that we have had to literally live hand to mouth," she said of the organization that grew from her senior thesis at Princeton University. "We've had to fight immediate fires instead of securing the kind of funding that would give us longevity."

Relatively small grants from national corporations and foundations were crucial to Teach for America's early development, said Ian M. Huschle, the group's director of communications, planning and development.

"But as we look to the future, we'll have to diversify our funding base while we seek long-term stability," he said. "We hope to increase the level of support from local corporations and foundations and tap into state and Federal funds."

No Government Money

The New York Times, January 12, 1992

So far, Teach for America has received no government money, Ms. Kopp said.

The Philip Morris donation, which is a three-year challenge grant, should greatly help Teach for America stabilize its operations and extend its search for state and Federal financing, Ms. Kopp said. Teach for America must raise \$3 million on its own to receive the \$3 million from Philip Morris.

Chief among the grant's benefits, officials said, was its support of Teach for America's recruiting efforts at 200 colleges and its mandatory eight-week training program.

Other plans call for the grant to help the group explore new means of evaluating its recruitment, training and placement of teachers and distribution of information. A computerized management system that could connect all the group's offices is also planned.

Stephanie French, the vice president of corporate contributions and cultural affairs for Philip Morris, said the grant was intended to help the group establish itself better.

"We just believe that Teach for America is a fabulous idea," Ms. French said, "a simple and brilliant idea."

She said she was most impressed with the organization's mission and leadership. Philip Morris also gave the group a \$100,000 grant shortly after it was founded in 1989, Ms. French said.

Small Grants and Donations

Ms. Kopp said she hoped the organization could obtain two or three other "significant, multiyear" grants like the one from Philip Morris.

Much of Teach for America's \$7 million annual budget is paid for by a patchwork of \$10,000 and \$25,000 grants and smaller individual donations, she said.

As Teach for America expands, adding about two sites each year, its officials say they also hope to be able to persuade governments and others groups providing grants in those locations to support the organization financially.

"But we want to be extremely careful," she said. "We want to remain independent and responsive. I don't think we would accept grants if they come with a lot of strings."

GRAPHIC: Photo: Wendy Kopp, the founder of Teach for America, appears to have made large gains in recent weeks in raising money and in raising the reputation of the two-and-a-half-year-old organization. (The New York Times)

SUBJECT: EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS; TEACHERS AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES; GRANTS (CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION)

ORGANIZATION: TEACH FOR AMERICA; PHILIP MORRIS COMPANIES INC

The New York Times, January 12, 1992

NAME: KOPP, WENDY; MARRIOTT, MICHEL

GEOGRAPHIC: BALTIMORE (MD); WASHINGTON (DC); TENNESSEE

CO: PHILIP MORRIS COS INC;

TS: MO (NYSE);

IND: 582 OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS;

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Copyright 1991 American Political Network, Inc.
Daily Report Card

September 4, 1991

SECTION: BETTER SCHOOLS

LENGTH: 426 words

HEADLINE: TEACH FOR AMERICA: PUTTING TOP GRADUATES TO WORK IN SCHOOLS

BODY:

An hour-long PBS special focused on the challenges, successes and failures of Teach For America, a peace-corps-type teacher corps that places the nation's top college graduates in areas with persistent teacher shortages. TFA was founded in 1989 by Princeton graduate Wendy Kopp. In its first year, TFA raised \$3 million, mostly from foundations and corporations, and recruited and trained 500 of the nation's top college graduates. Most were without teaching degrees and most would not have entered a classroom. TFA sought to create "a lasting force for education, a domestic teacher corps, modeled after the peace corps" (9/3). Kopp has expanded the program this year, raising an additional \$8 million and broadening its base to 12 locations.

Kopp: "Our vision is that America's most outstanding graduates dedicate themselves to educating America's children. ... What we're doing here, what makes this so challenging, is that we're putting people who have never experienced failure in classrooms with people who have never experienced success." After teaching for several months, TFA teachers had mixed reactions to the program, its effectiveness and the state of American education in general. Vicky McGee, a Yale graduate teaching elementary school in Los Angeles: "I'm optimistic in the sense that I think American education can change. I'm pessimistic in the sense that if it continues the way it's going, there are a lot of kids that are going to remain uneducated." She continued, "Whether people stay in education or not ... these are two years you'll never forget. And you'll really understand what the schools need, how you can help out teachers, how you can help these kids." At the end of the first year, 440 of the initial 500 participants were still teaching. Kopp has raised \$8 million and expanded the program to 12 locations (9/3).

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The Christian Science Monitor

August 22, 1991, Thursday

SECTION: OPINION; Pg. 19

LENGTH: 1068 words

HEADLINE: ' Teach For America' a Year Later

BYLINE: Deborah Appleman; Deborah Appleman is a professor of education at Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.

HIGHLIGHT:

The much heralded program recruited idealistic college grads to teach in some of the nation's toughest schools

BODY:

ALMOST exactly a year ago today, I examined and criticized the ambition and assumptions of the Teach for America (TFA) program. I admitted that my professional wariness of the soundness of the program was further heightened by my personal concern for six recent graduates of Carleton College, the small, selective liberal arts college at which I teach.

Teach for America has received mixed reviews of its first year. The Chronicle of Higher Education, The New York Times, and Education Week, among others, have all praised the intention of the program but raised questions about the first year corps members' lack of intense training and the danger of placing "underprepared teachers in charge of classrooms full of the at-risk students who populate inner-city and rural schools" (Education Week, July 31, 1991).

Of the six brave recruits who embarked from Carleton College into the "blackboard jungle" of our nation's most challenging schools, one person dropped out early in the fall, while another quit at semester time. The remaining four made it through the year, exhausted, disillusioned, yet ultimately proud of themselves and their students. They plan to return to finish their initial two-year commitment.

While I am not in a position to evaluate the relative successes and failures of the program as a whole, my conversations and correspondence with Michael Lach, the 21-year-old physics major who headed down to New Orleans to teach high school science, reveal the sorts of challenges that nearly all the corps members faced and the changes that resulted from their experiences.

Michael returned to Carleton's campus this summer to teach a computer class to college-bound high school juniors and seniors. He came armed with zydeco tapes, a roll of candid snapshots of his New Orleans students, harrowing anecdotes of the nightmare our public schools can become, second and third thoughts about teaching, and a cynicism and seriousness of purpose that surprises and alarms me.

Michael spent his first year at Alcee Fortier Senior High School in New Orleans. The school, he reports, is in dilapidated condition - graffiti-covered walls, peeling paint, collapsed ceilings. It is also woefully ill-equipped,

The Christian Science Monitor, August 22, 1991

not just for fancy science experiments, but for everyday teaching needs. For example, Mike had to buy his own chalk and paper and pay for his own duplicating.

Mike's middle-class sensibilities, typical of most of the TFA recruits, were challenged by the poverty and hopelessness of many of his students' families. For the first time in his life, he was in the minority, one of only six Caucasians in the school, all of them teachers. He became painfully cognizant of the stratification, racism, and classism of American society.

Mike peeked into kids' lives and what he saw demoralized him. He was confronted with children who had adult problems and sought adult solutions from him, and he didn't know the answers. He's reluctant to include sensational details about the violence and poverty that permeates his students' lives, because that kind of objectification shortchanges them. These kids, he insists, are doing the best they can with what they have. "They're great kids, and people know the wrong things about them."

Despite the overall bleakness of the school, Michael reports that he derived both support and inspiration from its veteran teachers, who were still gamely fighting a battle that seemed almost impossible to win.

Judging from Michael's dramatic transformation from an easy-going idealistic college graduate to a socially conscious and seasoned educator, something profound is occurring in those Teach for America classrooms. Never have I seen anyone change so much and in so many ways in just one short year. Mike carries a deep tiredness that sleep doesn't erase. The permanent wink has gone out of his attitude, and even his good humor is permeated by an undefinable melancholy. He had a serious job in sobering conditions. He suddenly became the authority figure, the very one against which he had spent most of his life rebelling. He is less patient with grown-ups and bureaucracies.

Michael's reservations about the effectiveness of Teach for America echoes the observations of other critics. Looking back on his initial training, he found it to be loosely organized, not sufficiently strict, and perhaps not taken seriously enough by many of the recruits.

He wishes that he had been given concrete information about his placement site by someone who had actually taught there. He laments his initial lack of knowledge about classroom management and lesson planning.

Mike is quick to point out, however, that these shortcomings have been recognized by TFA and that the training sessions have been restructured to provide students with more of the practical knowledge that first-year teachers need.

Was this bold alternative approach to teacher recruitment and preparation worth it, then, for Micheal Lach and his students? Mike says, "TFA and my experience has not made me a happier person. I see a sad, messed up place. I'm trying as best I can to change it. It's frustrating ... but it would be even worse if no one did it." His sense of social responsibility has been heightened, but now that he knows what needs to be done, he doubts that Teach for America, or this country, for that matter, has the resources to do it. He admits to a deep cynicism, and has lost a good deal of faith in the public school system and 'in the world.

The Christian Science Monitor, August 22, 1991

But what he has gained is a faith in himself and in the value of the effort that he spent last year in New Orleans. He still believes that he can change things, at least in terms of making a difference in the lives of his students. "I know there are some kids in that school who think that I'm the only person in the world who cares for them. And they're right."

When I asked Mike if he still believed in TFA, he replied, "Well, it's too bad you have to. These schools aren't working and something needs to be done."

My faith in Teach for America does not match Michael's; it's still tempered by the reservations of many professional teacher-trainers across the country. But I am prepared to admit that despite its organizational and structural shortcomings, some wonderful things happened in classrooms between teachers like Mike and his students.

Idealism may not be enough, but it is a place to begin.

GRAPHIC: ART: TOM HUGHES

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Copyright 1991 American Political Network, Inc.
Daily Report Card

August 22, 1991

SECTION: BETTER SCHOOLS

LENGTH: 333 words

HEADLINE: TEACH FOR AMERICA: PRAISE, SKEPTICISM ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY

BODY:

In a CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR column, Carleton College professor Deborah Appleman writes that the Teach for America program may be hampered by placing under-prepared teachers in the classroom. The program, which trains recent college graduates and places them in inner-city and rural schools, has just completed its first year. Appleman recounts the experiences of Michael Lach, a 1990 graduate of Carleton, who was assigned to a high school in New Orleans, LA. Lach characterizes his initial training as "loosely organized, not sufficiently strict, and perhaps not taken seriously enough by many of the recruits." Other shortcomings included not being provided firsthand information on his school by someone who had taught there before him. In addition, Lach remarks on his lack of classroom management and lesson planning skills at the beginning of the school year. But Lach's observations were not all negative. He refers to fellow teachers who taught at the school before his arrival as a source of support and inspiration. He also notes that TFA has restructured its training program to address the issues he raised. Lach: "TFA and my experience has not made me a happier person ... It's frustrating ... but it would be even worse if no one did it" (8/22).

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The New York Times

June 26, 1991, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final
Correction Appended

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 2; National Desk; Education Page

LENGTH: 1923 words

HEADLINE: For Freshman Teacher Corps, a Sobering Year

BYLINE: By SUSAN CHIRA

BODY:

Amparo Gonzalez, who used to call in sick because she was afraid to face her Harlem pupils, by spring was presiding over a spellbound class. Tarik Lemtouni loved coming to school in rural Georgia until one of his students smashed his head against a wall for taking away some candy. Mary Stechschulte, who had to fend for herself after her supervisor vanished in the third week of school, nonetheless plans to return for a second year of teaching in Brooklyn.

These are a few of the reports from the first year of Teach for America, the widely publicized program that seeks to revive public education by persuading many of the nation's brightest college graduates to enlist for a two-year stint in teaching. Some of the fledgling teachers have left, some have triumphed, and all have confronted the desperation and yearning of students in America's most beleaguered schools.

Some of the fledgling teachers have left, some have triumphed, and all have confronted the desperation and yearning of students in America's most beleaguered schools.

While it is still too early to say whether the new teachers are indeed changing education as Wendy Kopp, Teach for America's 23-year-old founder, envisioned, the fact that most of them are still there may be one measure of success.

Of the 489 teachers who walked into classrooms last fall, 53 have resigned. That is an attrition rate of almost 11 percent, slightly higher than the national rate for first-year teachers, but far lower than the 25 to 50 percent turnover rates in the school districts where most of the newcomers were placed.

For all the new teachers, it was a tumultuous year. In the beginning, Ms. Gonzalez said, "It felt horrible -- I thought I was going to faint." But as the months wore on, she gained confidence. "When I saw things happening with those kids, I thought: 'I can do it. I can stay,' " she added.

In this first year, Teach for America officials can point to many success stories -- a teacher who persuaded a school to revamp its entire curriculum, one who put on the first play in 20 years in one of Los Angeles's worst high schools, and a group that laid plans to establish a school of its own.

Still, many first-year teachers spoke of anguish and frustration. Several faulted the program, saying its eight-week summer training institute failed to

prepare them adequately for the realities of difficult classrooms and the blighted neighborhoods around them. Others said they felt marooned in their schools, without mentor teachers or support groups that Teach for America had promised to arrange for them.

Still, many echo the words of Carleen Moreno, who taught social studies to junior high school students in the South Bronx and plans to stay in teaching after her two years are up.

"The problems I want to learn about and the issues I want to deal with are in front of me right now," she said. "Some of the kids don't view education as an answer. If anything, that's what I want to get across to them, that education can open doors for them."

Sobered and Disturbed

But even those who count their first year a success say they are sobered and disturbed by what they found -- the poverty, violence, despair and obstructionism among schools and administrators in some of the country's most troubled neighborhoods.

"One morning, I asked a ninth grader to start out by writing the alphabet," said Mark Swinton, who teaches at Compton High School in Los Angeles. "He stopped at the letter 'D.' I'm black, too, and seeing so many black and Hispanic kids without skills. . . ." His voice trailed off.

This fall, Teach for America hopes to increase its corps to nearly 1,200, by placing 750 new teachers in 11 sites across the country that have chronic teacher shortages and will accept teachers without certificates. Next month, the new teachers will begin crash summer training in Los Angeles, taught by experienced teachers from around the country.

Ms. Kopp, the Princeton graduate who dreamed up the idea in her senior year in 1989, has raised \$4.6 million for the coming year and is trying to drum up \$3 million more. The money, from foundations and corporate donors, is used for administrative costs and the summer training institute; districts pay the teachers' salaries.

Estimates of Teachers Vary

Most supervisors say the Teach for America members did well for first-year teachers, although estimates of ability and contributions vary.

"They are wonderful -- superior to any new teacher that I've had," said Mirian Acosta-Sing, principal of the Mott Hall School for gifted and talented children in Harlem, who has two Teach for America teachers in her school.

"I think they were on a par with other people going through emergency credentialing," said Michael Acosta, the administrator for employment operations in the Los Angeles Unified School District, which hired 75 Teach for America teachers. "I don't think they did exceptionally well, or any better than fully credentialed teachers."

For One, It Was Too Much

By all accounts, this was a tumultuous first year. A teacher strike in New Orleans sidelined the new teachers for three weeks, and New York City's budget crisis meant that the Teach for America corps worked under a constant threat of layoffs.

Also, many were unprepared for the task of keeping classroom order, and many felt overwhelmed by the devastation and menace of some of America's roughest neighborhoods.

These problems drove Hilary Abell, a 22-year-old Princeton graduate who grew up in a Chicago suburb, to leave at the end of her first semester. She said her training did not equip her to control her seventh graders in Bedford-Stuyvesant, one of Brooklyn's poorest neighborhoods. Students popped out of their seats, threw things, hit other children, and finally one of them hit her -- although not very hard, she said.

Ms. Kopp said similar comments from others had prompted her to expand local support offices and add a two-week local orientation so teachers can learn about the neighborhoods near their schools. She has also changed the summer training institute, hiring teachers from the areas where the new teachers will be placed, who will then serve as yearlong mentors.

But Ms. Abell, along with some other Teach for America corps members and some school district officials, also believes the program promises more than it can deliver.

"I felt like to solve the problems in my classroom I would have had to solve the violence and poverty in the community," said Ms. Abell, who now works in a center that aids Central American refugees. "Teach for America came to be 500 points of light, the idea that certain individuals with enthusiasm can help a troubled system. But I think much more profound changes are needed."

Working for Change in Class

Such changes are just what Teach for America can bring about because the organization will be supplying much-needed infusions of teachers and can lobby to improve their lot, Ms. Kopp argues. "We don't want to be a Band-Aid," she said. "We think there is real potential for us to affect the ways teachers are supported and developed. Teach for America can be a real player."

Amparo Gonzalez is working for change in her Harlem class. The lesson this day in her American history class is feminism, and she harangues, exhorts and teases her seventh graders in a lively class discussion.

As she strides through the rows of desks, the students are reading aloud paragraphs from the Declaration of Sentiments, the document agreed upon at the historic 1848 meeting of feminists in Seneca Falls, N.Y. "Chastisement -- what does that mean?" she asks her students about one phrase in the document. "That means he can hit her, punch her, as if she were a child."

The students are gripped. They ask her if women were treated the same way as the slaves, if there were single parents then, if the fact that women still earn less than men means that they have to pay less in taxes. Then Ms. Gonzalez passes out a rap song called "It's a Shame (My Sister)," by the rapper Monie Love.

The students recognize the song, and sing along as the music sounds on a tape player. "Get it out your system / Don't be another victim," they sing, swaying and clapping.

"Do you think a woman in 1848 could have told her husband to get lost?" Ms. Gonzalez asks. "Why do we need someone to tell us -- 100 years later -- to be proud of who we are?"

Her students leave the class buzzing. "She likes to teach in different ways," said Martha Pertuz, who is 13 years old. "She explains about females and males and what they got to do that wasn't fair."

From Project to Princeton

Ms. Gonzalez herself went from a housing project in East Los Angeles to Princeton, and said she hopes to show her students that they can make it too. "I've told them, 'You have the power to change that because I have taught you this history,' " she said.

Ms. Gonzalez teaches at Mott Hall, which serves exceptionally gifted students. Across the country in Los Angeles, Mark Swinton has had similar success at a school reputed to be one of the country's roughest.

Mr. Swinton, who taught drama and ninth-grade English, arrived at Compton High to find the auditorium stacked high with boxes and lumber. At one of his first productions, where 60 pupils marked African-American history month, the curtain opened to six parents. But he eventually staged "Guys and Dolls" to large and enthusiastic crowds.

To attract students who usually cut class, Mr. Swinton tried acting out passages from books and having his class create and film a television news show. "It's been a rough year, too," he said. "There were times I just didn't know how to reach them."

Many of the Teach for America members said they were struck by how hard it was to motivate children and convince them that education mattered. And many said they loved their time in the classroom, but added that contending with bureaucracy, budget cuts and chronic shortages of everything from paper to textbooks might drive them out of teaching.

Indeed, budget cuts may yet threaten the new teachers. In New York City, which must cut \$505 million from its \$7 billion school budget, many of the young Teach for America members could be the first laid off. Teach for America has offered to move them to other cities, and is placing only 30 new teachers in New York in the fall, primarily in bilingual positions that will not be cut, said Ian Huschle, Teach for America's director of communications.

The Hardest Lesson

For most Teach for America teachers, as with most new teachers, the hardest lesson was discipline. Mary Stechschulte talks about a girl who grabbed a thumb tack, stuck other students with it, and then put it in her mouth rather than relinquish it to her.

Gradually, she and the other teachers said, they have learned how to keep order so they can teach. But Mr. Acosta, like other educators, said he was troubled that the teachers were committed only to two-year stints. By the time they really hone their skills and become most effective, he said, they are scheduled to leave.

Ms. Kopp said surveys show that most Teach for America members plan to stay on after two years. But either way, she is untroubled. "There is every bit as much chance that our people are going to continue beyond the two years as there is that people who enter without Teach for America will continue," she said. "If people leave teaching, this still will have created education advocates."

CORRECTION-DATE: June 26, 1991, Wednesday

CORRECTION:

An article and a chart yesterday about the Teach for America program to recruit and place new public school teachers included erroneous figures in some editions for first-year dropouts from the program in three of the six regions shown. In New York, 22 of 175 quit; in Los Angeles 21 of 215 quit and in North Carolina, 2 of 29 quit.

GRAPHIC: Photos: Amparo Gonzalez teaching seventh graders at Mott Hall School for gifted and talented children in Harlem. (pg. A1); Amparo Gonzalez conducting a class of seventh graders at Mott Hall School for gifted and talented children in Harlem. At first fearful of her students, Ms. Gonzalez said, "When I saw things happening with those kids, I thought: 'I can do it. I can stay.'" (pg. A21) (Jack Manning/The New York Times)

Graph: "The First Year"

Figures for Teach for America, a new teacher recruitment program.

	Teachers who stayed	Those who quit
New York City	153	22
Los Angeles	194	21
New Orleans	42	3
North Carolina	27	2
Baton Rouge	11	4
Georgia	9	1

(Source: Teach for America) (pg. A21)

SUBJECT: Terms not available

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The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

June 3, 1991

SECTION: STATE NEWS; SECTION C; PAGE 01

LENGTH: 1072 words

HEADLINE: Realism, not idealism, gets teaching corps past first year

BYLINE: By Betsy White Staff writer

KEYWORD: education; schools; personnel; organizations; profiles; georgia

BODY:

WRIGHTSVILLE, Ga.

Driving to work, Diane Brewer would fantasize about crashing her car, wishing she could end up bloodied and in traction rather than face another day on the job.

Ms. Brewer is a first-year teacher in a rural Georgia high school.

A 23-year-old California native, she is part of Teach for America, a corps of ambitious college graduates handpicked to teach in the nation's hardest-to-staff schools, including five in Georgia.

But, as Ms. Brewer can attest, that mission proved far tougher than the idealistic young recruits expected - and sometimes tougher than the 10 corps members assigned to Middle Georgia could stand.

Not only have these super-charged first-year teachers not changed the world, at times they could barely keep control in their classrooms. Their visions of instilling a genuine love of science or math or Spanish in eager young pupils faded as they learned to water down lessons so at least some of their unattentive students could keep up.; A litany of woes

These top college graduates - mostly Northerners come South - say they watched students beat each other bloody, observed racism so overt it sickened them, endured taunts from their pupils and gave passing grades for work that fell far short of their initial standards. They saw enough poverty, small-town politics, bureaucracy and small-mindedness to quench their idealism - and then some.

The story could end there, with a bitter and defeated group of former teachers fleeing for higher ground. But somehow, it doesn't.

One teacher left after a few months on the job. But all nine instructors who stuck out a sometimes-dreadful first year plan to teach in Georgia again next year.

It's hard to say just why they're willing to tackle another year in a job that Sarah VanOrman, the biology teacher at Hancock Central High School, describes this way: "You get assaulted all day, every day, by 120 people.

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You're giving all you have for them, and all they're doing is whining and bitching."; The teachers learn

But, strangely, the teachers say they love it. Even Ms. Brewer.

"I have learned so much, and I have come to realize that my students are really capable and talented," said the Johnson County High School Spanish teacher. "If you narrow your focus to the students you have in your classroom, you can have some successes there."

Although the problems have not disappeared, Ms. Brewer's daydreams of being felled by a car crash or disease have. "Sure, I went through a lot of bad days," she said. "But the good days are fantastic. On those days, I do a jig of joy as I walk out of the classroom."

Part of what drives these teachers to continue is their compulsion, as perfectionists, to do better. They know they can, having learned from the mistakes of the first year.

"These are people who have always been very successful, particularly in school; realizing that this wasn't always going to go well was very hard on them," said James Filoso, who directs Teach for America in Georgia. "I think that they are all looking forward to next year because they get to do it again, and they're looking forward to doing it right."; Looking for little successes

They've also lowered their expectations.

The class period they dream of now isn't one in which rapt students critically examine the subject at hand; more often, it is one in which students refrain from striking each other, pay attention some of the time and retain a bit of what's taught.

"You learn to live off those little successes," said Amy Safford, who teaches earth science to all 119 eighth-graders in Johnson County.

One over-age student in her class knew he'd be promoted to the ninth grade, even if he failed every class, as long as he showed up at least 150 days. So he came to class and did nothing.

"Getting that kid to work - it may not sound like much to you, but that one little success pushed me through the whole month of December," she said.

A final factor driving these nine teachers to return for a second year is their love for these young people, even the hostile teens who swear at teachers and say things like, "Miss VanOrman, I went to a different school last year, but I got kicked out - for shooting a teacher."

"Despite the problems, it's not like I want to leave Middle Georgia," said Brian Jones, a Spanish teacher at Hancock Central High who, like Ms. Brewer, is the entire foreign language department at his school. "These kids and these schools definitely need teachers."

Administrators of the schools concede that when it comes to finding teachers for specialized subjects such as foreign language, math and science, they sometimes must settle for any warm body. With Teach for America, they get a

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lot more than that.

Although corps members never planned to be teachers and didn't major in education, they're experts in their subjects - and they handle the pedagogy a lot better than they give themselves credit for.

"She has a nice method," Hancock County sophomore Tasha Baker says of Ms. VanOrman. "She brings science to our level of understanding, and she relates to us. She knows how to make science exciting."

Vince Coleman, a Johnson County senior, is equally impressed by Ms. Brewer. "This woman is a whiz," he said. "She's the best Spanish teacher Johnson County has ever had."

Of course, teenagers don't say those kinds of things to their teachers. Instead, they complain class is boring and moan about the workload.; Learning to change goals

"Before I started teaching, I felt that I had such a command of my subject and such a love for it that I could instill that in my class," Ms. Safford said, laughing at the recollection.

She quickly learned that some of her eighth-graders couldn't even read. Others lack the brainpower to remember what they ate for dinner the night before, she says, let alone master the mechanics of plate tectonics. Others are so traumatized by the poverty, violence and addiction at home that paying attention in class is an occasional occurrence, and doing homework is out of the question. Still others just don't care, no matter how much effort she puts into making the lessons come alive.

"No, these kids aren't all turning on to science," she said. "But when some of them come to me and say, Miss Safford, I looked up last night and I saw Orion just like you said, that's an accomplishment."

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Los Angeles Times

November 11, 1990, Sunday, Home Edition

NAME: WENDY KOPP

SECTION: View; Part E; Page 1; Column 5; View Desk

LENGTH: 2134 words

HEADLINE: TEACHING AMERICA A LESSON;

EDUCATION: A YEAR AND A HALF AFTER SHE LAUNCHED HER 'PEACE CORPS FOR TEACHERS,'
WENDY KOPP HAS ATTRACTED CONVERTS AND CRITICS.

BYLINE: By IRENE LACHER, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Lyell Champagne is looming above his fourth-graders in all his youthful authority-figure splendor. He's the picture of the casual Ivy Leaguer in his who-gives-a-hoot Yale sweat shirt and sneakers. Indeed, he is living testimony to where listening to the teacher will get you.

"Keep the classroom clean," Champagne says solemnly. "You never know who's going to come in."

Sure enough, a small entourage has just come in, led off by Betty Seward, principal of Inglewood's teeming Highland Elementary School, where this scene is being played out. Seward is being trailed by a few people, one of whom is a soft-spoken blonde in a long, pleated white skirt and preppy pearls.

"Some of you are interested in becoming teachers some day," Champagne continues. "Remember Teach for America. That's the program I'm with. It was started by this young lady here," Champagne says, gesturing toward the woman in the pearls. "She's not much older than you are."

In a world where everything is relative, that's relatively true. At the tender age of 23, Wendy Kopp is barely out of school herself.

It's been only a year and a half since she left the ivory towers of Princeton to haunt the corporate high-rises of America, coaxing out millions of dollars so she could bankroll and run her nonprofit brainchild, Teach for America (TFA).

Kopp envisioned TFA as a Peace Corps for teachers in inner-city and rural schools, a competitive lure for some of the country's best new graduates to do good somewhere in their own back yards rather than overseas. Kopp's idea is to help stem teacher shortages in some of the hardest-hit areas with some of the sharpest young talent.

"Having the brightest kids acting as role models for these kids is great," says Joe Alibrandi, a member of Teach for America's advisory board and chairman and chief executive officer of Whittaker Corp., a Los Angeles aerospace and biotechnology company that has given \$10,000 to the program. "Right now the role model (for inner-city youth) is the drug dealer, and to just have a role model that says, 'If you work hard and get a good education, you have a shot

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at being a major contributor to society,' I think it's a tremendous idea."

Indeed, by all accounts, Teach for America is a great idea. But now Kopp watchers are trying to determine whether it's a great reality.

Kopp's young corps hits the schools amid a revived national debate about national service programs, an issue that has found proponents on both ends of the political spectrum.

Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia has led a band of Democrats who are pushing a bill that would create a "citizen corps"; the proposal calls for young people, as many as 3 million, to earn college grants or tax credits in exchange for lending a hand to federal social programs.

Meanwhile, conservative thinker William F. Buckley is kicking in his own plan for national service with his new book, "Gratitude: Reflections on What We Owe Our Country" (see Josh Getlin's story, E1).

But while plans for national service programs pick up steam and converts in these days of shrinking budgets and mushrooming deficits, they have also attracted their share of controversy -- and Kopp's corps is no exception.

New York City-based Teach for America has come under fire for trying to do too much too soon, for recruiting insufficient numbers of minorities, for its administrators' lack of teaching experience, for its "youthful arrogance," and for throwing new teachers into such difficult situations that enlisting in TFA can seem more like a stint in the Green Berets than the Peace Corps.

Such barbs have been hurled by Op-Ed writers for the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor and the Wall Street Journal -- not to mention by corps members themselves.

Still, Kopp has laid claim to accomplishments far above those of her peers. She is running a \$2.7-million-a-year operation, whose annual budget is projected to double in the 1991 fiscal year. She is mobilizing 500 keen young members this year for two-year gigs -- 1,000 next year -- many of whom never seriously considered teaching before joining Teach for America.

And she's earning accolades from some of the country's top educators and executives in the process. In some quarters, Kopp has become a media darling. Glamour magazine, for example, will crown her one of its 10 Women of the Year in its December issue.

"I'm constantly amazed at Wendy's ability to get things done," says Teach for America board member Joe Alibrandi. "She really comes across as somebody who honestly has a deep conviction for what she's doing. She gives a sense of confidence that if you invest in her you will be damn sure she will get things done."

Kopp came by her business smarts naturally. Her parents put out guidebooks to Dallas and Houston for convention-goers. And as Kopp was growing up in Dallas, she did "complete plebe work for many years" for them, packing books and doing office work. Her early brush with business forged an "absolute decision that I never wanted to do anything like that. I only saw the grunt work, and I thought I would never want anything to do with business."

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That changed at Princeton. Enticed by an interest in journalism, Kopp fell into writing about student entrepreneurs for the student-produced Business Today magazine, published by the university's Foundation for Student Communication. Kopp's involvement quickly expanded to an intense 70 hours a week.

In spite of herself.

"It was so weird how I got drawn into this," Kopp says. "I absolutely didn't want to do it, but the thing is there were so many holes in the organization that there was tons of opportunity. I was an associate editor two months after I started working there."

When Kopp signed on at the foundation, the magazine was struggling at 32 pages a pop.

"We were bringing in \$300,000. We couldn't sell ads and couldn't publish some issues. There was a whole group of us who really worked to turn things around. We totally did. It became a complete obsession. We built it up to the point where it made \$1.4 million. At one point, we put out a 140-page magazine."

Kopp, who headed up the foundation and its magazine in her senior year, had hit upon a strategy that would later serve her well -- targeting high-level executives for help, rather than currying the favor of their minions.

Initially, Kopp says, "it was so frustrating, and we would meet with assistant managers and they would love it, but they wouldn't come through with money. I happened to be interviewing a high-level executive (for the magazine), and I said, 'We're about to go under. Can you advertise with us?' We sold six ads in two weeks.

"No one could believe what hit the organization. Money just came."

The foundation was also bringing students together with top execs at national conferences. And it was at one such conference that the idea for Teach for America was born. The setting was San Francisco, the year was 1988 and the conferees were brainstorming ways to improve education.

Kopp looked around and realized the answers were sitting all around her.

"Everyone was throwing out typical things -- raise teacher salaries and increase accountability," she says. "Those things need to happen, but they won't happen tomorrow. It just occurred to me that all these students we'd selected through the application process, it hit me -- let's recruit students like this. We'll recruit selectively and surround it with an aura of status.

"Then I was completely obsessed."

Kopp decided her public policy thesis topic would be a plan for implementing a Peace Corps for teachers one year after she graduated. Her thesis adviser, Princeton sociology department chairman Marvin Bressler, initially pooh-poohed her proposal.

Bressler recalls: "Her plan would involve raising huge sums of money from private sources and developing cadres of students from the best universities who would be afire with idealism, and then to train these students in a summer

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institute with all-star faculty, to obtain credentials for them, and to dispatch them to inner-city schools," and all within a year.

"I said, 'You are deranged.' "

"He hated the idea," Kopp says, "because he loves to hate things."

Bressler eventually became one of her greatest supporters. He lauds her thesis as "brilliant."

And he admires the quiet determination that enabled her to politely brush aside his objections, with all the naive faith of the relatively untested. In fact, he counts himself among the Teach for America supporters who say Kopp has done as much as she has, not despite her youth but because of it.

"It's always an advantage not to know that something can't be done," he says. "The great mythology of age is you can think of any number of reasons why something can't be done and, out of what purports to be wisdom, to surrender. She was never afflicted with that."

And at Teach for America, Kopp is not alone. Much of the organizing and recruiting has been done by people just barely out of school themselves. From a pool of 2,600 applicants culled from 100 schools nationwide, TFA selected 511 new teachers. Trying to appeal to successful students' competitive edge by making the program selective was part of the strategy.

The students converged last summer on the University of Southern California for training and student teaching under a faculty assembled by Carl Grant, a professor of education and Afro-American studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Then they were dispatched to needy schools in New York, Louisiana, North Carolina and Georgia as well as Los Angeles. About 200 members teach in 96 schools in the L.A. area. After Teach for America trains them, local school districts pay their way, from \$17,000 to \$29,000 a year.

Now that they're on the job, some corps members say that TFA did not plan for the expenses they would rack up -- fees for teachers' exams and obtaining credentials as well as the cost of setting up housekeeping in a new city. Twenty-six Teach for America members have already dropped out of the program, some because they decided teaching was not for them, others because they couldn't afford to continue, corps members say.

"We were told to come to California and come to this (summer) institute and not to worry about money because things would be taken care of," says Yale graduate Vicki McGhee, who teaches fifth grade at Highland Elementary. "We didn't know about a lot of the costs and they didn't know. And that's criminal. I know people who left the program because of money."

Also troubling to some is the potential cost of throwing inexperienced teachers into some of the grittiest battlegrounds of American education.

The Wall Street Journal's Barbara D. Phillips expressed her worries on the paper's Op-Ed page last summer:

"Even those who now plan to spend a lifetime teaching will go AWOL if they enter a school in which learning is a very low priority and find that

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idealism, intelligence and an understanding of cultural differences can go only so far in a poisoned, bureaucratic atmosphere."

McGhee, who plans to go on to medical school, agrees. "You throw a person into teaching where a lot of the kids are not as motivated about school, they don't value education as much, that makes what you have to do as a teacher three times as hard," she says.

Some of the problems might have been avoided, some critics say, if Teach for America had consulted experienced teachers.

Helen Bernstein, president of United Teachers-Los Angeles, says she met once with TFA administrators and offered the union's support and guidance, but they never took her up on it.

Still, Vito Perrone, a Teach for America adviser and the director of teacher education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, defends the corps.

"First years are difficult," he says. "No one is certain how they will work absolutely. They had a lot of staff to recruit in a short period of time. There was probably not enough time to plan the curriculum and to do everything that in retrospect they may have wanted to do.

"But I would not spend a lot of energy faulting that. I suspect they've learned a lot and next year's program will be far better."

Indeed, Kopp's foray into education has found her an eager student. She, as much as anyone else, knows there are lessons to learn.

Kopp says that next year, Teach for America will try to recruit its teacher-training faculty from the cities where the young teachers will be posted, so those with experience can provide continuing guidance. She pledges a more structured curriculum and plans to hire people with teaching experience to help recruit corps members and work at the summer institute.

"Next year will be smoother," she says. "We learned something every step of the way."

GRAPHIC: Photo, TFA founder Wendy Kopp observes a class at Highland Elementary in Inglewood. "Next year will be smoother" for the group, she says." ROBERT GABRIEL / Los Angeles Times

TYPE: Profile

SUBJECT: TEACH FOR AMERICA (ORGANIZATION); TEACHERS; TEACHING; LEARNING; UNITED STATES -- EDUCATION

TEACH FOR AMERICA

PO BOX 5114 • NEW YORK, NY 10185 • PHONE (212) 789-8302 • FAX (212) 789-8289

February 9, 1993

Mr. Eli Segal
Director of National Service
c/o Old Executive Office Bldg.
725 17th Street, NW, Room 145
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Segal:

I just read in Teach For America's internal newsletter that you recently asked our founder, Wendy Kopp, for suggestions toward developing a national service plan to encourage college students to begin a long-term commitment to public service. Lacking from the information she faxed you is a substantial emphasis on the need for recruiting a diversified group of volunteers and the problems you will face in such recruitment. Please accept the following as further suggestions.

It is my every hope you will both see the need for and make an extra effort to recruit people who are highly diverse in terms of race, religion, sex, and cultural heritage. Realize, however, recruiting a culturally diverse pool of college students will be difficult.

As an African-American, I can tell you first-hand it has been a struggle for me to work in community service for the past three years since I graduated from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Like many African-Americans, I was not blessed with affluent parents who could afford to send me to college. With college loans to pay and other expenses facing me, I could have easily chosen to take my college degree and put it to work at a fortune 500 company. Unlike some European-Americans (a.k.a. the Ivy Leaguers who could delay careers indefinitely to start an organization like Teach For America), when an African-American chooses to work in community service beyond college it is a tremendous sacrifice since he/she is giving up opportunities which may not be available in the future.

If you intend to actively recruit an ethnic diverse group of volunteers across the nation, you must be fully aware of the challenges you face. If you plan on recruiting volunteers in general without any special targeting of various groups, you will essentially do what Teach For America has done, recruit a vast majority of European-American college students and a handful of other ethnicities. Depending upon the nature of service these students are involved in, your efforts could be very successful or produce no measurable difference. In other words, if a large number of European-Americans volunteer to help save the environment, then they will probably be highly successful. If you send a large number of European-Americans into inner-cities to the extent that they far outnumber the number of African- and Latino-American volunteers, then your programs will be less effective.

Simply put, African-American college students volunteering in African-American communities is much more effective than whites volunteering in the same communities. This is not to say whites can not be effective in black environments, but if white volunteers go into black communities to volunteer and then leave, the effect will be limited. However, if black and Latino volunteers go back into inner cities where they

might have been reared, they automatically become role models and first-hand proof of how blacks and Latinos can succeed. Certainly whites can volunteer in inner cities, but they must be effectively balanced with a more than fair amount of blacks and Latinos.



I understand volunteering in inner cities and in education will not be the only areas of volunteering where your efforts as the National Director of Service will be geared. However, these are major areas where service is so desperately needed. College students need to be encouraged to get involved in service, and I am glad President Clinton is attempting to motivate a sense of responsibility for all men and women among college students. Surely Dr. King's saying "None of us are free until all of us are free" speaks to a present view of American society. Until we are able to develop and utilize the skills of every citizen, America will not be able to operate at its fullest potential.

I hope you have someone who will be in charge of recruiting volunteers who are diverse in terms of culture and race particularly. If you have not realized a need for such an effort, I am available to discuss and develop strategies which may be of assistance to you. I can be reached at 212-789-9302, ext. 107.

C-

Thank you for taking the time to review my letter and enclosed information, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,

James L. Gulling
Director of Campus Relations
and
Charter Corps Member
(1990-1992)
Teach For America

W.J. 718-965-4280

To: Robert Gordon
From: Wendy Kopp
Date: 2-16-93

I look forward to meeting you all today!

I thought I would fax my thoughts regarding our Friday morning conversation. I understand your interest in increasing the number of opportunities for recent college graduates to serve (and thus to pay back loans). I think there is a way to do this, as indicated below, although I don't think TFA is the appropriate vehicle for doing so. Here are my thoughts:

Why do we define Teach For America as a "Professional Corps"?

First, we believe (and our belief in this has been significantly strengthened over the past three years) that teaching is a tremendously demanding profession – one which necessitates a *highly* intensive selection process, as well as an extensive, continuous program of professional development. Second, one of our aims is to strengthen and professionalize teaching by modeling effecting recruitment, selection, and professional development, and by cultivating an image of selectivity and status. Third, we want to avoid labelling ourselves a "Service Corps" for fear that by doing so, we might relegate teaching to being a short-term endeavor; we use the label of "Professional Corps" to imply that members are making a short-term commitment to a profession that could be a lifetime endeavor.

What are the limits to our scale?

Teach For America is currently limited by three factors: (1) funding; (2) applicant pool; and (3) placement availability. If we had all the funding we needed, as well as the necessary infrastructure, we believe that we would be able to recruit, select, and place 800 - 1,000 individuals per year.

Despite the efforts of eight full-time recruiters (all passionate, driven former corps members) on 150 college campuses, Teach For America's applicant pool hovers between 3,000 and 3,500. Of those applicants, recruiters indicate that they would admit at most 1,000 individuals, and approximately 85 percent of those accepted into the program matriculate. It is important to note that our applicant pool is now much more self-selective than it was initially; our recruiters and former corps members have spread the word that TFA is an incredibly challenging experience, and many potential candidates have been dissuaded from applying.

Teach For America is committed to clustering corps members in certain regions so that we can establish effective systems for their ongoing support and professional development. In the sites¹ where we currently place corps members, we would be hard-pressed to find more than 700 placements.² Those sites have been chosen because they demonstrate the largest need, so while we could certainly add additional placement sites, the extent of the need in those sites would be significantly less than that in our current 16 sites.

¹ New York, New Jersey (Newark and Paterson), Baltimore, Washington, DC, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Houston, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco; and in rural areas in North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas' Rio Grande Valley, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

² While these sites have more than 700 vacancies, they are in hard-to-fill areas such as special education and bilingual education.

Why are we averse to placing TFA corps members in positions subsidized by the federal government?

First, if these positions entailed responsibility and challenges equivalent to those which our corps members face, we would not be able to fill a great many of these positions (because of the limited number of qualified applicants). Second, we feel that it is essential that the members of professional corps be treated in their work environment exactly as other beginning members of their profession. To pay them less, or more, would be destructive to their status and to the morale of other teachers. Finally, we fear that unions would react negatively. Currently, unions generally support Teach For America because we place only in teacher shortage areas, because we are highly selective, and because our corps members leave open the option of continuing in teaching for their careers. The union reaction might be different if the federal government created additional teaching positions which were equal in status to existing positions and yet could be filled only by people fulfilling a short-term "service" commitment.

How can the Clinton Administration increase the availability of service opportunities in the schools?

By funding positions in schools which are different from *teaching* positions. City-Year's model for school-based service might provide some ideas as to what types of positions would be helpful. There is a tremendous need for teaching assistants and tutors. Our corps members would *welcome* helpers!

If you fund these additional positions, why should you still make possible the creation and institutionalization of "Professional Corps"?

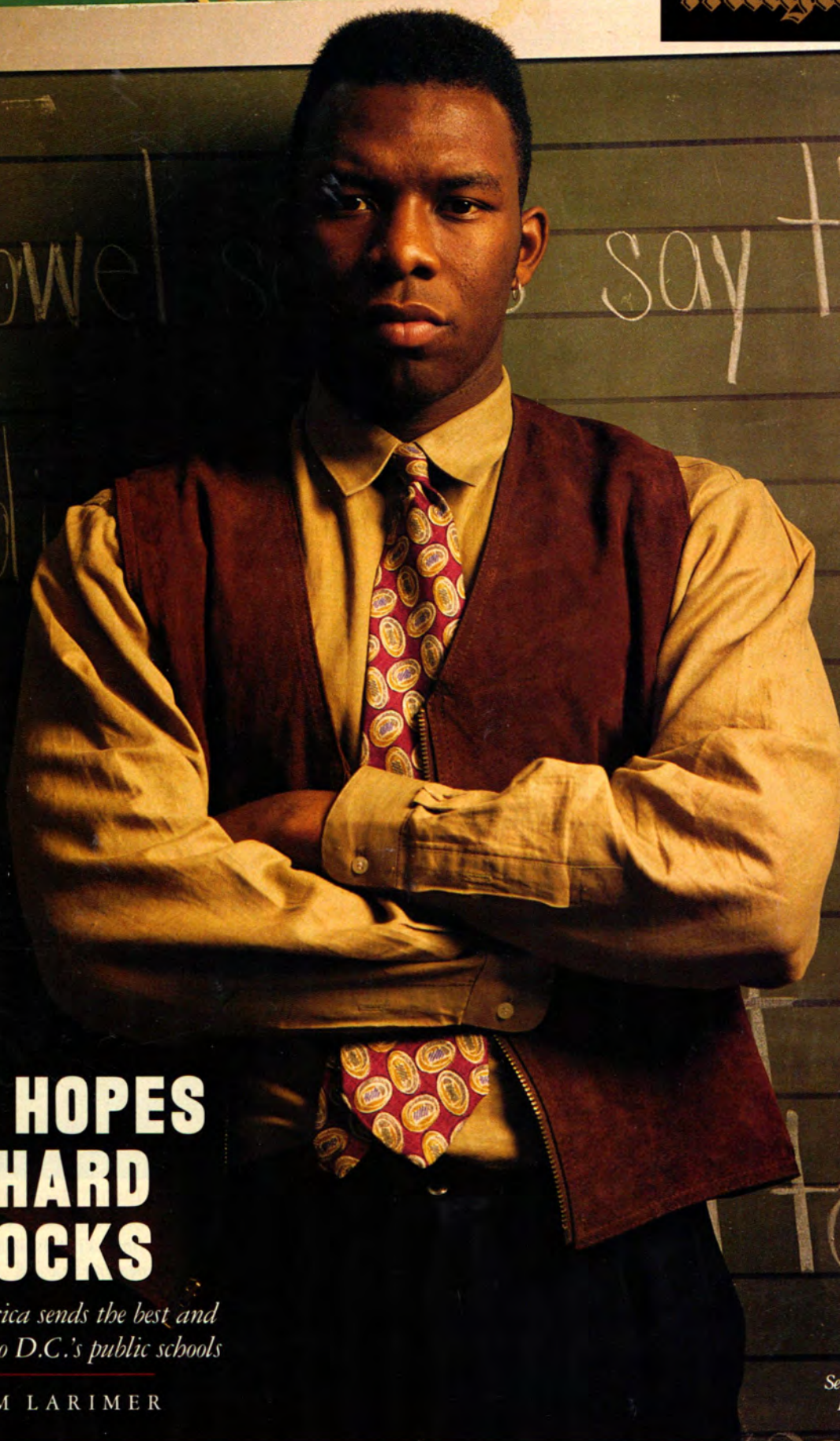
Because it is essential to show people that public service does not have to be a short-term thing. Professional Corps, which require short-term commitments to public service jobs which can be public service *careers*, have the potential to serve as the first step in a lifelong commitment to problem-solving in the public interest.

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HIGH HOPES *and* HARD KNOCKS

*Teach for America sends the best and
the brightest into D.C.'s public schools*

BY TIM LARIMER

*Second-grade teacher
Darry Strickland*

Peter Carlson Focuses on Focus Groups

2/11/93

Kate/Susan

Let's talk about
this in terms of how
we develop our lists,
set up our meetings,
etc.

Gloria

TEACH FOR AMERICA

PO BOX 5114 • NEW YORK, NY 10185 • PHONE (212) 785-9302 • FAX (212) 788-9289

February 9, 1993

Mr. Eli Segal
Director of National Service
c/o Old Executive Office Bldg.
725 17th Street, NW, Room 145
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Segal:

I just read in Teach For America's internal newsletter that you recently asked our founder, Wendy Kopp, for suggestions toward developing a national service plan to encourage college students to begin a long-term commitment to public service. Lacking from the information she faxed you is a substantial emphasis on the need for recruiting a diversified group of volunteers and the problems you will face in such recruitment. Please accept the following as further suggestions.

It is my every hope you will both see the need for and make an extra effort to recruit people who are highly diverse in terms of race, religion, sex, and cultural heritage. Realize, however, recruiting a culturally diverse pool of college students will be difficult.

As an African-American, I can tell you first-hand it has been a struggle for me to work in community service for the past three years since I graduated from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Like many African-Americans, I was not blessed with affluent parents who could afford to send me to college. With college loans to pay and other expenses facing me, I could have easily chosen to take my college degree and put it to work at a fortune 500 company. Unlike some European-Americans (a.k.a. the Ivy Leaguers who could delay careers indefinitely to start an organization like Teach For America), when an African-American chooses to work in community service beyond college it is a tremendous sacrifice since he/she is giving up opportunities which may not be available in the future.

If you intend to actively recruit an ethnic diverse group of volunteers across the nation, you must be fully aware of the challenges you face. If you plan on recruiting volunteers in general without any special targeting of various groups, you will essentially do what Teach For America has done, recruit a vast majority of European-American college students and a handful of other ethnicities. Depending upon the nature of service these students are involved in, your efforts could be very successful or produce no measurable difference. In other words, if a large number of European-Americans volunteer to help save the environment, then they will probably be highly successful. If you send a large number of European-Americans into inner-cities to the extent that they far outnumber the number of African- and Latino-American volunteers, then your programs will be less effective.

Simply put, African-American college students volunteering in African-American communities is much more effective than whites volunteering in the same communities. This is not to say whites can not be effective in black environments, but if white volunteers go into black communities to volunteer and then leave, the effect will be limited. However, if black and Latino volunteers go back into inner cities where they

might have been reared, they automatically become role models and first-hand proof of how blacks and Latinos can succeed. Certainly whites can volunteer in inner cities, but they must be effectively balanced with a more than fair amount of blacks and Latinos.



I understand volunteering in inner cities and in education will not be the only areas of volunteering where your efforts as the National Director of Service will be geared. However, these are major areas where service is so desperately needed. College students need to be encouraged to get involved in service, and I am glad President Clinton is attempting to motivate a sense of responsibility for all men and women among college students. Surely Dr. King's saying "None of us are free until all of us are free" speaks to a present view of American society. Until we are able to develop and utilize the skills of every citizen, America will not be able to operate at its fullest potential.

I hope you have someone who will be in charge of recruiting volunteers who are diverse in terms of culture and race particularly. If you have not realized a need for such an effort, I am available to discuss and develop strategies which may be of assistance to you. I can be reached at 212-789-9302, ext. 107.

Thank you for taking the time to review my letter and enclosed information, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James L. Gulling".

James L. Gulling
Director of Campus Relations
and
Charter Corps Member
(1990-1992)
Teach For America