

FOIA MARKER

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[Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Alcohol and Drug Program Administration]
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National Service Correspondence Logging Sheet

Order: BH
Date: 4-17

- I. Purpose of Letter:
- Wants to Participate
 - Summer of Service
 - National Initiative
 - General Commentary
 - Pro
 - Con
 - Suggestions for Programs
 - Requesting General Information
 - Summer of Service
 - General Program
 - Offering their Services
 - Volunteer
 - Internships
 - White House
 - National Service (Jim)
 - Employment

- II. Writer Information:
- A. Age (Circle One):
Under 17 17-25 Over 25 Unspecified
- B. Education Level (Circle One):
1. Student:
 - Elementary
 - Secondary
 - College
 - Graduate
 2. Non-Student (Level Completed):
 - Secondary
 - College
 - Graduate

- III. Re-route to Other Departments
- Commission
(Personal, service organizations,
or business proposals)
 - Scheduling/Gloria
 - Other _____

- IV. Certified Mail



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March 3, 1993

Eli Segal
Assistant to the President
for National Services
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Segal:

We are excited about the establishment of a National Service Corps. We hope that the program grows and is highly successful in mobilizing people to be of service to America.

We are operating a VISTA program at the two largest alcohol/drug rehabilitation centers in the United States. Our VISTA Volunteers work in raising basic skill levels (reading, writing, math) for our patients as well as do outreach to schools with a message for students to stay away from drugs and stay in school.

As the enclosed article by Sharon Moeser indicates, we believe that the National Service Program should be extended at some point to involve recovering people and ex-convicts, who come from the inner cities, in rebuilding our cities by working to prevent drug use and promoting education.

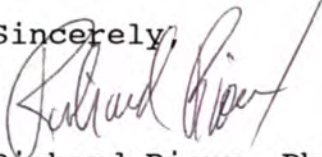
We have trained over 1,000 recovering addicts to serve as literacy tutors for over 2,000 functionally illiterate recovering alcoholics and drug addicts. Our program has enjoyed remarkable success.

WE NEED
THANKS FOR
IDEAS
REGRET
NO MEETING.

If you would like to visit our centers in California or would like to talk to us or our VISTA Program Manager, Joan Crawford, about ways to expand the National Service, please let us know. We would enjoy sharing our ideas with you.

Best of luck.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Rioux".

Richard Rioux, Ph.D.
Associate Director

RR:vo

Enclosure

Antelope Valley Press

More Antelope Valley People Read The Valley Press Than Any Other Newspaper★

VISTA workers help those on road to recovery

By SHARON H. MOESER
Staff Writer

ACTON — At Acton Rehabilitation Center there is little difference between the VISTA volunteers and those they help.

The seven volunteers are each former residents of the center and are now working with those whose lives they understand so well.

VISTA, the acronym for Volunteers in Service to America, was established by the federal government in 1964. It is often described as a domestic version of the Peace Corps.

Dr. Richard Rioux, associate director of the county-operated Acton rehab and its sister facility Warm Springs, in 1991 received authorization to sponsor 10 VISTA volunteers.

A chance to serve

"When I first heard about VISTA in 1990 it was like a dream come true," Rioux said. Through the federal program he is able to offer people who come through the recovery program at Acton a chance to serve their government.

"People VISTA is designed to serve are now being VISTA volunteers themselves," he said.

VISTA volunteers serve for one year "living and working in poor communities," according to a VISTA brochure. "VISTA volunteers are building a new America one community at a time."

At Acton rehab the volunteers work on the issue of

literacy in recovery, Rioux said. A literacy program at the rehab centers is producing measurable results, with many participants going on to further their education and also showing higher rates of sobriety.

Joan Crawford, a program specialist with the agency that oversees VISTA, said as far as she knows Rioux has the only VISTA volunteers who work specifically in the area of recovery.

"As far as a program tailored and directed and using volunteers in that sense it is unique," Crawford said. There are 3,400 VISTA volunteers nationwide and 225 in California.

VISTA volunteer and former Acton Rehab resident David Lowe said, "Education is the way to empower people — not handing them a bag of groceries, not handing them a g.r. (general relief) check."

Besides working with residents at the center VISTA volunteers reach out to local intermediate and high schools, Rioux said. Through workshops they also provide training to agencies and organizations about the importance of literacy in recovery.

A book of stories about literacy and recovery is being put together by the volunteers, he said. They are also producing a video.

The seven "VISTAs" at Acton Rehab went through a three-day orientation in San Francisco along with other VISTA volunteers from throughout the west.

"They were totally amazed to see us there," said Oliver Young, a recovering alcoholic and drug addict.

"Being part of VISTA, it's like being part of the Unit-

ed States, the recovery of the United States," said Young. "Before, I was part of the problem, I was the problem. Now I'm part of the solution."

While Young is helping others he is also helping himself through the program. "I really feel like I have value, like I have something to give."

Joseph Hunter stopped attending school at the fifth grade although he did take some classes during his different stays in prisons. Now he is a literacy tutor. And a VISTA volunteer.

Butch Pentacion was on death row at one time in his life. Now he has four years of sobriety and is starting his second year as a volunteer.

"I voted through VISTA for the first time in my life," Pentacion said. "You always hear about a dream. VISTA is a real dream."

Service corps

Rioux and his volunteers are hopeful President Clinton will recognize the importance of VISTA and use it as a basis for the national service corps he has been talking about.

"In the general population people are not aware of VISTA," Rioux said. "VISTA should be built on for the creation of a national service corps."

Crawford said she too would like to see VISTA used as the cornerstone for Clinton's service corps.

Rioux and his VISTAs also believe any such program needs to be expanded into rehab centers and even prisons.

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