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YOUTH POLICY INSTITUTE

David L. Hackett
Executive Director

March 3, 1993

Mr. Eli Segal
Office of National Service
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

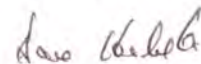
Dear Mr. Segal:

As national service accelerates, the issue coming to the forefront is training. We support young people being trained to tutor or immunize children, but we also believe that young people are capable of service that truly empowers communities to begin solving long-term problems. Young people can be trained to meet the fundamental information needs of this country.

Literally hundreds of young people have been trained here at YPI over the last decade to be *collectors*. They are taught a strict methodology for researching solutions on issues ranging from health care to homelessness to crime. And as our community efforts have developed, another type of training has emerged: that of the *facilitator*. The work of the collectors is only valuable if it is used. The facilitator is trained to directly assist community organizations, providing access to information and helping people to use that information for decision-making and planning.

The CORPS has established university-community links in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and West Virginia. Any of these sites could be involved with the Summer of Service. Please let us know what opportunities you see.

Sincerely,



David L. Hackett
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY ACTION CORPS

In World War II, young people served their country by saving it. They were rewarded with the G.I. Bill. Since then, there have been few opportunities for young people to accomplish something of equal importance, or to earn the same respect. Young people today, however, can provide a service in *this* country which is as powerful as that provided fifty years ago.

This service requires going beyond tutoring or staffing a homeless shelter to address the fundamental needs of our citizens, organizations, and communities. The Policy Action CORPS provides this opportunity. As *collectors* in the CORPS, university students are trained to research solutions for the problems faced by individuals and families, public and private organizations, and all of our communities. As *facilitators*, young people work directly with these organizations and communities, providing access to the range of options on any issue for decision-making and for planning. These service roles allow young people to provide a link of information that has been missing for thirty years: an accessible collection of past and current successes on topic after topic.

- Just as the C.I.A. recruits some of our brightest people to collect information internationally, the CORPS initiates a process that enables young people to present comprehensive information on domestic problems. By locating the CORPS in colleges and communities around the country, we can tap into an immense existing resource of talent at very little cost.
- Similarly, as the age of telecommunications and information superhighways approaches, the work of the collectors can create a national network of information that is both needed and truly empowers its users.
- In the end, the young people of the CORPS can affect each of us. Not only will organizations have access to this information, but citizens too can become informed about the problems of their communities and the options for beginning to address them. We can debate and discuss and participate, and finally shape the programs and policies that affect our lives.

There is a lot of talk about change, but there is little that can match what young people can bring about through true service. The original G.I. Bill recognized the people who saved this country. That opportunity is with us again.

THE CORPS

The Collector

- The collectors are a select group of university students trained in a systematic research methodology. Even though there will be dozens of facilitators for every collector, the work of the collector is what completes the 'missing link.' Collectors are dedicated to bringing together information on solutions. They look at demonstration projects and model programs nationwide, at legislation from the federal, state, and local level, at the proposals of scholars and practitioners, at the regulatory and judicial systems, and at the history of successful and failed efforts. In the end, what they provide are concrete options for addressing the problems that face our citizens, organizations, and communities.

The Facilitator

- The facilitator is trained to make the work of the collectors accessible and facilitate its use. Once a facilitator is trained, it is a role that person can play at any age, as a high school or college student, as a recent graduate involved full-time with community service, as part of a career in public service.

For example, a young woman coming out of CORPS training decides to serve in an inner-city community. As a *facilitator*, she enters that community capable of playing four distinct roles:

- She can work with groups who represent individuals and families in the community. Her responsibility is to provide information on the issues that residents are concerned about. For example, she could run small meetings of families to discuss the range of choices for finding child care, and to present options for eventually solving the lack of child care in the neighborhood (model programs that can be implemented).
- She can work directly for an organization, ranging from a small non-profit or CBO to a local business. Her role is to provide the information that the organization needs for planning. For example, if a homeless shelter wanted to set up a substance abuse clinic, she would facilitate the process by both presenting the best thinking in the country on the issue and by helping the organization to use that information. Her value is that she can present options for every decision that the shelter has to make.

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- She can work on a community-wide project. For example, even if the community is struggling with a complex issue like keeping assets within the neighborhood--a great problem in the inner cities--she can assist in the discussion, the planning, *and* the implementation of efforts. Her capability is to provide community leaders with information on innovative models from across the nation, and with an understanding of what has succeeded and failed in the past.
 - She can become a planner in the community. As the inner city attempts to deal with all of the problems that it faces, there will need to be people who are trained to communicate equally with organizations in health and in economic development. The collectors provide the information which makes this communication possible. The facilitator can initiate the dialogue which then leads toward true integrated planning at the local level.

The Demonstrations

- In communities like south-central Los Angeles, CORPS demonstration projects are being developed. The problem being addressed in each community is this 'missing link' of information. Even though there are successes and experience in every field, there is little memory of past successes and failures, and little information available on solutions that have been developed and proposed throughout the country. In Los Angeles, the collectors and facilitators will be separate groups of young people, trained by a central office. Collectors will be recruited at local universities such as UCLA and USC to commit to researching issues that arise from the community. Facilitators will be trained to work directly with local community organizations. The role of the CORPS will be straightforward: not to make decisions for the community or press an agenda, but to provide the information that is desperately needed.

The Objective

The objective of the CORPS and the demonstrations is simple. It must become a given in this country that any citizen or organization can tap into solutions for whatever problem they are facing. In the end, this process must not belong to any one organization, but to all institutions and communities.

The Campaign for America At Its Best

"A slight change in the process..."

THE MISSING LINK

Proposed Solutions



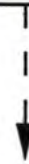
THE METHODOLOGY

Comprehensive Objective Research on Proposed Solutions
by the Policy Action CORPS



THE DATABASE

Collection of Proposed Solutions and Their Status



The Opportunities

1

Informed Citizens Participating in the
Political Process



2a

Planning by
Individuals and Families

2b

Planning by
Organizations

2c

Planning by
Communities



3

INTEGRATED PLANNING
by Individuals, Organizations and Communities

"To make whole by
bringing all parts together."