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# The AmeriCorps Now!

“not later, for Adams 14.”



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## KaBOOM!

After October 16th, 2008, the Holly Park Apartment complex in Commerce City would never look the same. Early that morning, over 200 volunteers descended on the apartments with one goal in mind: to construct a brand new playground in just one day.



*Pictured above: Malissa Suek & Jake Hoffius*

The ambitious volunteers consisted of members from The Home Depot Foundation, KaBOOM!, Mercy Housing Colorado, Holly Park residents, and of course CARENET AmeriCorps. The build was made possible by a \$57,400 grant provided by The Home Depot Foundation, as well as a \$10,000 contribution from Mercy Housing

Colorado. KaBOOM!, which led the event, "is a national nonprofit organization that envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America."

The morning began with a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem by a Holly Park Apartments resident. As the day progressed, AmeriCorps members could be found working hard at painting the basketball court, building flower box benches, constructing a rock wall play set, and moving massive amounts of mulch.

While the volunteers were adding the final touches to the fast-paced project, many of the residents' children could be seen pressing their



noses against their windows eagerly awaiting their new playground. Their anticipation grew while the cement dried for the next three days. On Monday, October 20, the playground was officially opened.

Brien Russell

### Upcoming Events

Veteran's Day	Nov. 11
Operation Free Bird	Nov. 15
Training	Nov. 17
Team Thanksgiving Dinner	Nov. 27

### Fun Facts About AmeriCorps!

AmeriCorps was founded in 1993 as the domestic Peace Corps, with the charge of addressing four basic principles:

1. Strengthening communities,
2. Encouraging responsibility,
3. Expanding opportunities for members and those they assist, and
4. Getting things done in American communities.

**If you have any questions about AmeriCorps or would like to know more, check out our website:**  
[www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)

## Returning Members at a Glance

This year the CARENET AmeriCorps team is lucky to have 5 returning members from the 2007-2008 school year. Although it was uncertain for a while as to whether the CARENET program would even be in existence this year, our members stuck around, waited it out, and are

happy to be back in the schools for another year at Adams 14. One member of our team that we would like to highlight this month, and let you know a little bit more about, is Brooke Herrmann. Brooke was born in Wisconsin and spent the better half of her growing years in a

small town just north of Milwaukee. She attended college at The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she earned a B.A. in social work. While in college Brooke readied herself for AmeriCorps by doing work in various

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## “Getting Things Done”

www.americorps.org

# Life After AmeriCorps

If you happen to carpool with Matthew Bitner—AmeriCorps alum and current Central Elementary employee—chances are you will have to wait for him after school. Everyday when the bell rings, Bitner walks one of the students he sees regularly outside to the student's ride. This particular student is one of the many that have come to see him as much more than a teacher. "I've had more than one kid say that they wish I were their dad," said Bitner.

Originally from Preble County, Ohio, this 24-year-old finance major found his way to Colorado through the magic of CARENET AmeriCorps. "I moved to Colorado to begin AmeriCorps after deciding the finance field was not where I wanted to be," said

Bitner. "Had it not been for AmeriCorps, I can't say for certain that I would be as passionate for something as I am serving the next generation."

Bitner's passion seemed to reach the school he served in AmeriCorps. After his year-long term of CARENET in 2007-2008, Central Elementary offered him his current position as a Paraprofessional Special Ed teacher.

Bitner notes that working with Special Ed students "requires patience and a strong will to help the students reach their potential. This typically goes beyond teaching the basics of education into developing life skills." The challenges of his job this year have only helped Bitner in his future plans. Currently I plan on completing my Master's degree in Special Education

and acquiring a job in the Denver Metro area," Bitner said. Thanks, AmeriCorps!

Malissa Suek



*Pictured Above: CARENET AmeriCorps alum Matt Bitner and some campers during a 2008 summer WOW camp*

# Lights, Camera, Film Festival!

In the event that you haven't already cleared your calendar, the fourth annual Adams 14 film festival will be held at Adams City High School on May 14, 2009. The Festival will include more fabulous submissions from elementary, middle, and high school students throughout the district.

The filmmaking process will be supervised by many of your local AmeriCorps members during before and after school programs. Therefore, if you happen to stumble into a dressing room, rehearsal, or fiery exchange over creative control please remem-

ber that everything is under control and that eight year old has been well trained to use that expensive camera.

The Film Festival provides Adams 14 students with a very unique learning opportunity. When a classroom video project is implemented effectively it includes an emphasis on planning, writing, rewriting, public speaking, cooperative learning, and information literacy. I will personally be acting as executive producer/casting director/assistant sound editor/angry teacher/guy at table/person yelling "I didn't say we could touch the camera yet!"

for the Dupont STARS program. I am very excited to work on such an exciting project that may or may not include a high speed matchbox car chase, children who turn into zombies when they do homework and/or a sock puppet dog that eats homework.

The acclaimed American director and auteur Stanley Kubrick once said, "Perhaps it sounds ridiculous, but the best thing that young filmmakers should do is to get hold of a camera and some film and make a movie of any kind at all."

For more information please visit <http://schoolweb.acsd14.k12.co.us/FilmFest/index.htm> on your local world wide internet.

Darren M. Latanick

# Returning Members at a Glance cont'd

group homes and community centers. But even before that, Brooke says she was always involved in her community starting at the age of 12.

As for the future, none of Brooke's plans are definite. However, right now she plans on returning to school next year to obtain her teacher's license



*Pictured Left: Brooke Herrmann, at a recent Sand Creek Greenway Cleanup*

and to begin work on her Masters. "Someday I would like to develop my own non-profit, at this point I can't be more specific than that. And over time, I plan to change the world!" says Herrmann. We wish her all the best of luck with that!

Alexa Plotkin