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The AmeriCorps Now!

“not later, for Adams 14.”



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What Exactly Is AmeriCorps?

Many of you may be asking yourselves the same question...what is AmeriCorps? Often referred to as the "Domestic Peace Corps," AmeriCorps is a national network of hundreds of programs throughout the U.S.A. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act. Upon swearing in the first class of AmeriCorps members in 1993, Bill Clinton said, *"Service is a spark to rekindle the spirit of democracy in an age of uncertainty. When it is all said and done, it comes down to three simple questions: What is right? What is wrong? And what are we*

going to do about it?" This Act established the Corporation for National and Community Service and brought the full range of domestic community service programs under the umbrella of one central organization and thus AmeriCorps was born. In short, AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engage Americans in intensive service to meet the nation's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. Obviously the AmeriCorps members that you may see in Adams 14 are focused on service in the realm of education. AmeriCorps mem-



bers, such as those found in Adams 14, each have committed to complete 1,700 hours of service in the District over the next 11 months. My name is Darren M. Latanick and I approve this message.

If you have any questions about AmeriCorps or would like to know more, check out our website:
www.americorps.org

Upcoming Events

Holly Park Playground Build	Oct. 16
Make a Difference Day	Oct. 25
Staff Development Day	Oct. 31

Fun Facts About AmeriCorps!

- AmeriCorps is a division of the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- More than 70,000 individuals currently join AmeriCorps annually, totaling more than 500,000 members since 1994.
- President Bill Clinton has been quoted saying that AmeriCorps members have "taught thousands of children to read."

New Members at a Glance

Mrs. Mary Kate Russell hails from Mobile, Alabama. At 23, she recently graduated from the University of South Alabama; she majored in Speech Pathology and minored in Psychology, and also plans to attend graduate school in the future. Having moved to beautiful Denver, Colorado, a short couple of

weeks ago with her recently wed husband Brien, both are now our freshest CARENET AmeriCorps meat.

After discovering CARENET online, Russell says she "was really excited about the chance to work with kids in a different part of the country. I also really wanted to have a positive

influence on at-risk children." Though Russell has only had a short amount of time so far to set her stamp on Monaco Elementary where she spends about nine hours of her day, students have noticed her friendly demeanor and enjoy her company. She

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“Getting Things Done”

Weekend Wonders—outside service

For most of us, the work week ends when the bell rings on Friday, but many times, that is when an opportunity arises for our AmeriCorps team to get involved with our community. In the month of September, we collaborated with Sand Creek Regional Greenway and REI to complete riverside clean-ups on both the Sand Creek and South Platte rivers. Most of our work included removing invasive tree species, such as



Pictured from left to right: Brooke Herrmann, Darren Latanick, Kathryn Gray, Micah Klaver and Matt Bitner.

the Russian olive, but also trash pick up and trimming of dead branches. The areas of the river trails that we have worked on are now more pleasing for native plant species, due to reduced competition. They are also more enjoyable for the regular or new trail users. Most of those involved with the clean ups walked away with scratches and bruises, but not before meeting new people, having a little fun, and getting the job done. Our individ-

ual task seemed small, but combined with the hundreds of others that were signed up for both day events; each action really had a great impact. It is each small step now that leads to the overall better picture. This reigns true in many aspects of our lives, but especially for what we are all doing in Adams 14.

Lisa Dalby



Pictured from left to right: Kaiman Triplett, Lisa Dalby, Alexa Plotkin, Malissa Suek and Darren Latanick.

What Does AmeriCorps Mean to

Our very own Vincent Lucero had a chance to sit down with Lupe Gonzalez, a teacher at Kemp Elementary school, to discuss what exactly AmeriCorps means to her.

Q: What is AmeriCorps to you?

A: For me, AmeriCorps represents a partnership between teacher and volunteers both helping to make a difference for those in need in the community.

Q: How does AmeriCorps impact the classroom?

A: Volunteers in the classroom represent another set of ideas and skills other than my own, from which I am able to draw from. This ultimately serves to better the educational experience of the children in my classroom.

Q: How beneficial is an AmeriCorps team member to an at risk youth?

They are extremely beneficial because they step in to provide students a positive educational role model. Kids really look up to the AmeriCorps members and want to do better in

school and at home so that they can share their successes with the member.

Q: What do you think could be done to improve AmeriCorps presence in the classroom?

A: Provide adequate training to AmeriCorps volunteers not only in the areas of education but also in the areas of dealing with special needs children including strategies for individual or high risk students.

Lupe Gonzalez is a bilingual teacher at Kemp Elementary School. She has been teaching in Adams 14 since August

1993. She started out as a Teacher's Aide and was offered an opportunity to obtain her teaching degree after a grant was offered to her. She then applied and was accepted to the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. She graduated with a bilingual/bicultural teaching degree in December 2000 and then went to CU Boulder where she obtained her Master's Degree in August of 2005 with a major in English as a Second Language.

Vincent Lucero

New Members At A Glance cont'd

cited students remarking that she “smiles a lot,” and even had one young student say, “You’re nice. I love you.” The affection is mutual. Russell says she has always wanted to work with kids. “I’ve always liked being around little kids when they learn something new. It’s also fun to learn their different perspective on things.” In her personal life, she even anticipates having some fun little minds of her own to

of her own to mold. “Hopefully I’ll have a few kids before I turn 30. I definitely want to have a big family.”

As for CARENET, Russell says “I want to come out of it with lifelong friends, confidence in the classroom, and a lot of great memories.”

Malissa Suek