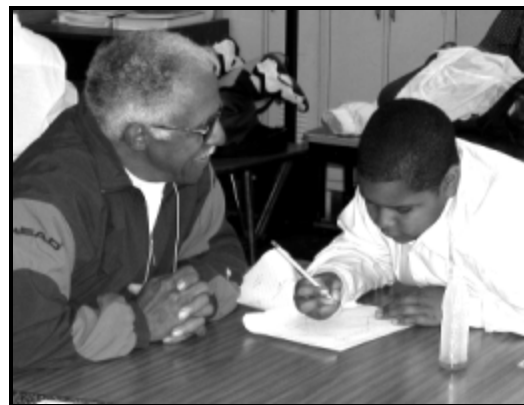
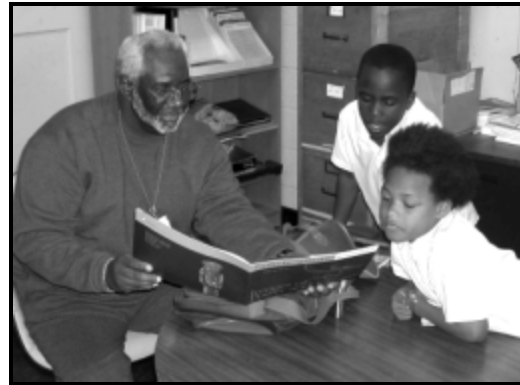


Engaging Older Volunteers in After-School Programs

Richard P. Adler



Engaging Older Volunteers in After-School Programs



Richard P. Adler

Civic Ventures
139 Townsend St., Suite 505
San Francisco, CA 94107
www.civicventures.org

October 2002

ENGAGING OLDER VOLUNTEERS IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I. Introduction	1
II. The Changing Face of Aging	2
Seniors as Volunteers	2
III. Linking Seniors with Youth	5
Senior Volunteers in After-School Programs	7
Experience Corps.....	7
Senior Volunteers and 21 st Century Community Learning Centers.....	13
IV. Recruiting, Training and Supporting Older Volunteers.....	15
Recruitment	15
Training	20
Support.....	21
V. Conclusion.....	22

Appendix: Location of Experience Corps Projects

About Civic Ventures

Acknowledgements

Civic Ventures is grateful to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for providing the funds that supported the preparation of this guide.

The author wishes to express his thanks to those who helped in the preparation of this report by generously contributing their time and sharing their knowledge with me. Thanks to Michelle Stokes and David Crowley of the Boston Experience Corps; Tom Taylor of the Washington, DC, Experience Corps; Michael Funk, Lori Byers and Eunice Lin Nichols of the San Francisco Experience Corps, and Judith Simmons of the Kansas City Experience Corps. Thanks also to Marc Freedman, Cathy Maupin, Deborah Dalfen, Emily Gillingham, Lorin Pogir and Tracy Schroth of Civic Ventures; Jean Baldwin Grossman of Public/Private Ventures; Starla Jewell Kelly and Jocelyn Walters-Brannon of the National Community Education Association; Stephanie Davolos Harden of Citizen Schools, Boston; Meagan Townsend of LA's BEST; and Steve Fowler, Erin O'Hara and Sandra Naughton of FowlerHoffman/Afterschool.

Richard P. Adler
October 2002

ENGAGING OLDER VOLUNTEERS IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

I. INTRODUCTION

In Boston, a group of older volunteers meet twice a week with 2nd and 3rd grade students to help them improve their reading skills during the after-school hours. In Kansas City, senior volunteers participate in a variety of roles in both before- and after-school programs for elementary students. In San Francisco, senior volunteers provide students at seven elementary and middle schools with tutoring and homework help. And in Washington, DC, a group of retired men serve as mentors for 5th and 6th grade boys at an inner-city elementary school.

These activities are all part of Experience Corps®, a national program that recruits older adults to serve as tutors and mentors for at-risk children. These projects illustrate just a few of the ways that older volunteers are helping to enhance and extend the value of after-school programs.

This report is intended to inform those who operate or support after-school programs about the potential value of older adults as volunteers in these programs. The key message of this report is that because of their life experiences, their available time, and patience, older volunteers can be exceptionally effective in providing at-risk students with the individual attention and support that they so badly need.

The report consists of three main sections. The first section, “The Changing Face of Aging,” provides an overview of the current and future senior population. In particular, it discusses what we know about the involvement of older adults in volunteering. In this section, we will look at who volunteers and why.

The second section focuses on the role of seniors as volunteers working with children and youth. We look at research on the benefits for both groups of linking seniors with youth, and then present survey data that show that “working with children and youth” is the most popular choice of volunteer options among older Americans. This section also describes in greater detail how Experience Corps is linking seniors with young students in after-school programs.

The final section contains practical suggestions about recruiting, training and supporting older volunteers. In many cases, the practices that work well with volunteers generally are also effective with older volunteers. But in some areas, there are special considerations that can make a difference in successfully recruiting and engaging older adults as volunteers.

II. THE CHANGING FACE OF AGING

America is in the midst of a demographic revolution. The number of people over the age of 65 in this country has doubled during the past 30 years and is about to double again – from 35 million to 70 million – as the Baby Boomers move out of midlife and into the third age.

For the most part, the focus of attention related to the aging of the American population has been on how much this change will cost us in Social Security, Medicare and other entitlement payments. However, the rapidly growing older population is not simply a bundle of costs, but represents an untapped social asset, a human resource potentially available to alleviate some of the most significant problems facing our society.

In fact, America now possesses not only the largest and fastest-growing population of older adults in history, but the healthiest, most vigorous, and best educated. Only five percent of seniors reside in nursing homes, and many experience no disability whatsoever. Just as important, older Americans possess what the middle generation lacks: *time*.

First, elders have time to care. Retirement frees up 25 hours a week for men and 18 hours for women. The prevalence of early retirement and longer life means that many Americans now at work will spend a third or more of their adult life in retirement.

Second, seniors have more time lived. They have practical knowledge, and in some cases wisdom, gained from experience. They may well be our greatest repository of the social capital that many fear is drying up.

Third, seniors' time left to live may give them special reason to become involved in civic and voluntary work that constitutes their legacy to others. According to the late psychologist Erik Erikson, the hallmark of successful late-life development can be encapsulated in the understanding, "I am what survives of me."

Seniors as Volunteers

Traditionally, participation in volunteer activities has declined as people enter later life. However, recent studies suggest that interest in volunteering and civic engagement is increasing among older Americans.

A national survey conducted in 1999 by the Independent Sector found that "seniors are now volunteering at a higher rate than ever before."¹ According to the survey, nearly half of all Americans age 55 and over volunteered at least once in the past year (see Table 1 next page). Even among those age 75 and older, 43% had volunteered at some point in the previous year (an increase of 9 percent from three years earlier). Seniors volunteered for an average of more than 3 hours per week, with those aged 65 to 74 contributing the most time as volunteers (an average of 3.6 hours per week). As a whole, 27.5 million older Americans are providing a total of 7.5 billion hours in volunteer time annually. This obviously represents a valuable potential resource for any organization or agency that makes use of volunteers in its activities.

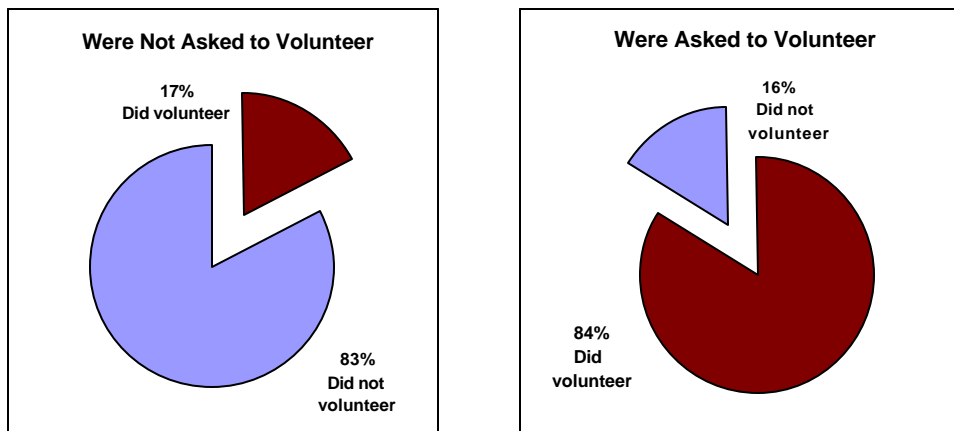
TABLE 1
Seniors as Volunteers

	Age 55 to 64	Age 65 to 74	Age 75+
% of age group who volunteer	50.3%	46.6%	43.0%
Total number of volunteers	11.9 million	8.5 million	7.1 million
Average weekly hours per volunteer	3.3 hours	3.6 hours	3.1 hours
Total time volunteered annually	4.8 billion hours	1.6 billion hours	1.1 billion hours

Source: *America's Senior Volunteers*, Independent Sector, June 2000

The Independent Sector survey also suggests that the participation of seniors in volunteering could be expanded substantially. The survey shows that older adults (presumably like those of all ages) were much more likely to volunteer if they were asked to do so. Just 17 percent of seniors who were not directly asked to volunteer did volunteer on their own. Among those who were asked, however, 83 percent – or more than four times as many – volunteered (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
The Impact of Being Asked to Volunteer (Adults Age 55+)



Source: *America's Senior Volunteers*, Independent Sector, June 2000

According to the survey, only half of those age 55 to 64 and older, and less than one-third of those age 65 and older, said that they had been asked to volunteer in the past year. African-American and Hispanic seniors were less likely to be asked to volunteer than white seniors. However, members of these groups who were asked were as likely to volunteer as other racial or ethnic groups.

A survey conducted in 2002 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for Civic Ventures confirms the growing interest of older adults in community service. The survey found that 56 percent of the respondents, who ranged in age from 50 to 75, said that community

service was or would be an important part of their retirement. The survey also found that more than half (57 percent) of respondents had volunteered in the past three years, and that 25 percent were devoting at least five hours a week to volunteering or community work.²

An earlier survey conducted by Peter D. Hart for Civic Ventures found that volunteering and community service ranked only behind travel in importance as a part of retirement to older Americans.³ These results held true for virtually all demographic segments – both men and women, liberals and conservatives, seniors in every region, people in their 50s and their 70s, those who are healthy and those limited by medical conditions.

What these data suggest is that the old paradigm of later life as a time for recreation and leisure activities is rapidly being replaced by a new paradigm that sees this period of life as a time for continuing personal growth and renewed engagement in community service.

III. LINKING SENIORS WITH YOUTH

Nowhere is the human resource that seniors can provide more desperately needed than in the lives of socially-isolated young people living in low-income neighborhoods. The need is particularly great in the non-school hours, where low-income children find few opportunities for safe, constructive, organized activities.

We now know that relationships with caring adults can make a significant difference in the health and well-being of young people. Research on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program has found that the involvement of an adult mentor in a young person's life for a single year reduced first-time drug use by 46 percent, cut school absenteeism by 52 percent, and lowered violent behavior by 33 percent—along with positively impacting alcohol abuse, family relationships, and school performance.⁴ And the benefits of a mentoring relationship grow stronger the longer the relationship continues.

These results are echoed in other studies, including the \$24 million multi-year survey of adolescent health funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and 17 other federal agencies. The study found that the engagement of adults in the lives of young people is one of the most important factors in guarding them from an array of risk factors. According to Dr. Robert Blum of the University of Minnesota Medical School, principal investigator of the study, what matters most in helping young people is “a sense of caring and connectedness that comes from at least one person in school, from a parent, from someone, that really protects kids from all sorts of negative outcomes.”⁵

Where might we find the individuals to play a positive role in the lives of children, especially at a time when men and women in the middle generation are facing enormous time pressures? Arguably the most promising potential resource is the older population, a group that may well constitute this country's greatest untapped resource.

There is also evidence that older adults excel as mentors and tutors. Research shows that one does not have to be a charismatic superhero to make a difference in young lives. Rather, the key factors are patience, taking the time to listen to children while avoiding the impulse to offer quick solutions, and the capacity to show up consistently, especially with young people who have seen a lot of adults move in and out of their lives. Older adults have a virtue which may be the greatest asset of later life, that of taking things more slowly.

Mentoring can be particularly appropriate for older adults. In a national survey, older mentors “reported helping the youth more than other types of mentors.”⁶ And according to Jean Rhodes, author of a recent comprehensive survey of mentoring, the experience of being a mentor can be highly beneficial for older people “for whom the experience can provide a sense of accomplishment and offset feelings of stagnation and loss.”⁷ Rhodes points out that the mentors can benefit from their role in a number of important ways: “In addition to the sheer joy, pride and inspiration that sometimes accompany mentoring, many volunteers benefit from the social interaction. Other rewards can include improved health, self-esteem, insight into one's own childhood or children, and public recognition.”⁸

Finally, data from several surveys indicate that older adults are particularly interested in working with young people. In the 2002 Civic Ventures survey, the most frequent response to a question about the type of volunteer activity that respondents most enjoy or consider the most appealing was “working with children and youth” (see Table 3, below). This result is confirmed by a 2001 survey about volunteerism conducted with AARP members in New York. When asked to list topics that interest them enough to volunteer, “education/tutoring” was the most frequently selected topic, picked by 29 percent of the respondents.⁹ These results suggests that volunteer opportunities provided by after-school programs should be very popular with seniors.

TABLE 3
Most Popular Volunteer Activities Among Seniors

1. Working with children and youth	35%*
2. Volunteering with a religious organization	33%
3. Helping other seniors	25%
4. Volunteering at a hospital or medical facility	15%
5. Working with the homeless or poor people	13%
6. Working to preserve the environment	8%
7. Working for a political campaign or cause	8%
8. Volunteering with an arts organization or a museum	6%
9. Working to preserve homeland security	4%
*Respondents could pick one or two activities	

Source: *The New Face of Retirement*, Peter D. Hart Research Associates for Civic Ventures, 2002.

By bringing together the needs of young people for more caring and consistent adult support with the potential benefits to older men and women through providing these connections, it is possible to envision a “win-win situation” of staggering proportions—especially when one considers that older adults not only have the numbers to do this work at considerable scale, but that they may well be the only major segment of the population that has the time to do it. While Americans in midlife are now working over 160 more hours a year than two decades ago, studies show the older population is “rich” in discretionary hours. And just as important, these older adults often have time at *the right time*: they are often available during weekdays when most Americans in the middle generation are at work and after-school volunteers are most needed.

Harnessing the current and coming generation of retirees could constitute a windfall for our communities, provide the younger generation with an abundance of new support, and supply increased meaning and connection to millions of older lives. Although the number of seniors currently volunteering in after-school programs is still small, several inspiring examples of such involvement can be found today.

Senior Volunteers in After-School Programs

More than 20 years ago, the Foster Grandparents program in Orlando, Florida, began placing seniors in an after-school program in a housing development for low-income residents. The volunteers worked with the program's paid staff and with high school students to help elementary school children in the program. They provided homework help, assisted in the computer lab, and developed and presented curriculum on topics such as neighborhood safety. They also made friends with the children and supported them when necessary.¹⁰

Across Ages is a project that started in Philadelphia in 1991. The project, developed by the Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning and funded by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, recruited older adults to serve as mentors for at-risk middle school students. Over an eight-year period, more than 800 children were matched with mentors, received training in "life skills" and participated in community service activities. (A second group of students were not assigned mentors but participated in the other program activities; a third group received no intervention and served as a control.)

The volunteer mentors ranged in age from 60 to 85; some had not graduated from high school while others had graduate degrees. They were asked to make a commitment to spend at least four hours a week with their students for a period of one year. In fact, most of the volunteers contributed considerably more time to the program, and a majority of the mentoring relationships continued for at least two years.

An evaluation of Across Ages showed that the greatest benefits were realized by the students who had mentors. These students had significantly better results than either "partial treatment" students (those without mentors) or non-participants in terms of having more positive attitudes towards school and their future, having better school attendance records and being less likely to use drugs.¹¹

Experience Corps®

Experience Corps represents an ambitious effort to recruit older adults to serve as mentors and tutors for at-risk students.

In the fall of 1995, an Experience Corps demonstration project was launched with \$1 million in funding provided by the Corporation for National Service (the first time that demonstration dollars were used for the National Senior Service Corps). The project focused on recruiting older adults to work with low-income elementary school students in five communities – Philadelphia; the South Bronx; Minneapolis; Portland, Oregon; and Port Arthur, Texas. The volunteers were facilitated by a paid Experience Corps project director in each community, assisted by VISTA volunteers who coordinated the project at individual sites.

The Experience Corps model was built around five basic principles:

- **Commitment:** Experience Corps was created as a national service program focused on mobilizing older adults (essentially an AmeriCorps for the 55-plus

group). As such, joining Experience Corps means making a substantial commitment to service, at least 15 hours a week for a minimum of one school year in return for a tax-free stipend of approximately \$150 dollars a month to cover transportation and service-related expenses. This approach is designed to provide maximum consistency of support to young people, and to assure that the older adults provide a stabilizing presence.

- **Connection:** An essential component of Experience Corps is development of strong social ties among the individuals serving in a particular school or youth program. The program is designed around *teams* of older adults to allow participants to provide mutual support and assistance to each other as well as to help them accomplish projects.
- **Critical Mass:** Experience Corps members are deployed in sufficient concentration to be a real presence wherever they are serving. The goal is not only to reach a substantial number of children, but to have an effect on the entire school or program climate—helping to make them more caring, personal places.
- **Leadership:** Experience Corps members are encouraged to use their initiative, creativity, and leadership skills to help fill essential gaps—such as the development of enrichment activities for the children.
- **Learning:** Experience Corps is dedicated not only to *expending* experience but also *acquiring* new experiences—to combining learning and growth with service to others.

The Experience Corps name was coined by the late John Gardner, former Secretary of HEW and founding chairman of Civic Ventures. It deliberately avoided reference to chronological age or, for that matter, any of the other terms so often linked to later life. It is not a “Senior Citizens Corps” or even a “Wisdom Corps.” Rather, the name was intended to focus on the widely possessed quality of experience, the kind of common-sense experience that so many individuals who have lived into the third age can claim.

The pilot participants showed a great gift in connecting with children, exhibiting the kind of consistent time, patience, and non-judgmental attitude that are the attributes most closely associated with successful mentoring. In addition, they provided intensive, stable resources for extending the reach of existing programs within the school. And the volunteers frequently drew on their work experience and hobbies, as well as an entrepreneurial spirit, to develop creative new program options in the schools at which they served.

Growth of Experience Corps

Since the original five-city pilot, which ran from 1995 through 1997, Experience Corps has continued to grow and flourish. The size of the individual projects has grown steadily, and the number of sites around the country has increased nearly four fold. Today 15 projects are currently operating in 14 cities across the country. (See Appendix for a list of Experience Corps locations.)

Experience Corps now engages nearly 1,000 volunteers who serve 15 hours a week or more (along with many others who serve two to four hours a week). It currently receives

\$1.6 million a year from AmeriCorps, making it the largest recipient of AmeriCorps funding of any program engaging older adults in service. And inspired by the success to date of the Experience Corps, the Bush Administration has requested an increase of \$30 million in FY 2003 AmeriCorps funding for a “senior service initiative.”

The program model has also evolved since 1995. Although the original model focused exclusively on intensive service by volunteers of 15 hours a week or more, many volunteers came forward who were interested in contributing their time but were unwilling or unable to commit to a full 15 hours per week. In response, unstipended Experience Corps positions were created where individuals work with one or two children two days a week, putting in about four hours each week. This approach has provided individuals with more options to contribute that are tailored to their particular life circumstances.

Experience Corps After-School Programs

The primary focus of the current Experience Corps programs is on providing volunteers who serve as tutors and mentors for students during the school day. However, four of the 14 cities that have Experience Corps projects include active after-school programs in addition to in-school activities (see Table 4 below). The overall goals and approaches of the after-school programs are very consistent with those of the Experience Corps’ in-school programs.

TABLE 4
Experience Corps After-School Programs, Spring 2002

	Boston	Kansas City	San Francisco	Washington, DC
Lead Agency	Generations Inc.	YMCA of Greater Kansas City	Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center	Experience Corps of Washington, DC
Location(s)	Roxbury and Dorchester Boys and Girls Clubs, Conservatory Lab Charter School	Linwood, Forest Avenue, and 8 th Street YMCAs; Blue Hills Neighborhood Center	Francis Scott Key, Lafayette and Sanchez Elementary Schools; AP Giannini, Presidio, Everett and Gloria P. Davis Middle Schools	Birney Elementary School
Grade level of students	2 nd & 3 rd grades	Pre-K - 12 th grade	K - 8 th grades	5 th & 6 th grades
Activities	“Reading Coaches” literacy tutoring	Tutoring and nutrition (elementary students); nutrition, mentoring, recreation (teens)	Homework help, reading, enrichment activities, field trips	Mentoring of 5 th and 6 th grade boys
Number of students	52	500 (including summer program)	425	22
Number of volunteers: Full-time/ part-time	6/12	25/0	20/23	3/11

The after-school programs reflect a diversity of approaches. Some are highly structured and academically oriented; others are more flexible and include other types of activities. Some are focused primarily on tutoring, while others put more emphasis on mentoring. Two of the four programs operate entirely on school premises, while the other two operate in other facilities, such as YMCAs or Boys and Girls Clubs. Some operate only during the school year, while others operate year-round.

Each of the four Experience Corps after-school programs is described in the following sections.

Boston

In Boston, 18 Experience Corps volunteers participate in an after-school program called “Leaps in Literacy,” which is focused on helping 2nd- and 3rd-grade students improve their reading skills. During the 2001-2002 school year, the program operated in three locations – the Roxbury Boys and Girls Club, the Dorchester Boys and Girls Club, and the Conservatory Lab Charter School.

The Experience Corps program in Boston is operated by Generations, Inc., a non-profit community organization that provides programs that bring youth and seniors together. The organization started in 1991 as Magic Me Boston, which created “Generation Clubs” that brought middle school students to visit elders in retirement communities. In 1996, Generations Inc launched its Experience Corps program, which is focused on literacy tutoring.

The Boston program is the most structured of the four Experience Corps after-school programs. The program is based on Reading Coaches, a widely-used tutoring model originally developed by Mike Houston for the SLICEcorps in Kentucky. The program is designed specifically to help students who are struggling with their reading skills, but who are not so far behind that they qualify for special in-school remedial programs.

Each student is paired with a tutor. Students and tutors meet at least twice a week (and preferably three times a week) for 30-45 minutes to read a book together. Each site maintains a library of approximately 100 to 150 books, each of which is accompanied by a folder that provides suggested activities. Prior to meeting with a student, tutors pick a book to read, review the text and create a written session plan. In the session with the student, the tutor introduces the book, goes through vocabulary that may be difficult for the student, then listens as the student reads the book out loud. After finishing the book, the student is asked to complete an activity based on what he or she has read.

To ensure that the program is fun for the students as well as academically useful, the Boston program includes field trips, “game days,” parties and other social activities to supplement the reading exercises. Generations Inc. tries to involve parents as well as their children in the program. Earlier this year, a Running Start Initiative provided each student with a package of seven different books accompanied with guides designed to help their parents read the books with them.

Kansas City

The YMCA of Greater Kansas City is the host agency for the Experience Corps in that city. In addition to providing volunteers in schools, it operates after-school programs for both elementary and middle school students at three YMCAs and at the Blue Hills Neighborhood Association. The Linwood YMCA offers a before- and after-school program for elementary school students and a drop-in after-school program for teens. The other three locations offer only the drop-in after-school program for teens.

The Linwood YMCA hosts a childcare program before and after school that serves approximately 70 young students from a nearby elementary school. The students begin arriving as early as 6 am when they are dropped off by their parents. In the morning, three Experience Corps members assist two paid staff members. One volunteer serves as a “greeter” welcoming students and checking with their parents about specific concerns or requests for the day. Two other volunteers act as “breakfast buddies” to provide students with a nutritious meal before they go to school.

In the afternoon, three Experience Corps members serve as “homework buddies.” They work one-on-one with about 25 to 30 students every day, making sure that they complete their homework assignments. They also read stories with them if their homework is done. The volunteers help the students keep a “homework chart” that documents what they have accomplished, and twice a year the students who make good progress are given small rewards.

The Linwood YMCA also hosts a drop in after-school program for teens from nearby middle and high schools. Four Experience Corps members help staff this program every weekday. Two of the volunteers noticed that the students were going to the vending machines to purchase snacks when they arrived at the YMCA. The volunteers were concerned that the students were often eating junk food, so they created a snack program in which they prepare and serve more nutritious snacks to the students every afternoon. Another volunteer works on arts and crafts projects with the students.

The Experience Corps members in the teen program help to organize a number of other activities. Once a week, for example, one volunteer leads a discussion about current affairs. They have also helped students plant and cultivate a garden, invited interesting guest speakers, and helped organize field trips to attend a movie or go roller skating.

The volunteers at each location are supervised by a YMCA staff member who is responsible for youth programs. Each group of volunteers also has a “team leader” who is responsible for providing liaison between the volunteers at that site and the Experience Corps program director.

San Francisco

The Experience Corps program in San Francisco is operated by the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center (SNBC). The SNBC is one of eight Beacon Centers in the city, each located in a different neighborhood.

The Beacon program began in New York City in 1991 and has spread to a number of other cities across the country, including San Francisco. As part of the community school

movement, their goal is to “transform school environments into friendly neighborhood meeting places.” Beacons typically offer a wide range of programs including recreational, social service, educational, and vocational activities for both students and adults.

The Beacons describe themselves as “bridges between school and home, between school and community.” The program is managed by community-based organizations in collaboration with local school boards, school administrators, and other community organizations. For each program, a community advisory council, with representatives from each of these groups, is established to provide guidance.¹²

The Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center operates programs in one elementary and one middle school in its neighborhood and at its own storefront office. It also coordinates Experience Corps programs at five other San Francisco elementary and middle schools that are affiliated with other Beacon projects in the city:

Experience Corps members participate in both in-school and after-school programs at these locations. Approximately one-third of the volunteers participate in after-school programs, while the rest work during the school day (some volunteers split their time between the two). Each school has a local coordinator who is responsible for administering the program and supervising the volunteers. The coordinators in San Francisco are AmeriCorps VISTA members, who are generally college-age young people who serve for one or two years.

The primary focus of the after-school program in San Francisco is on providing homework help and academic enrichment. The program lasts for three hours each day and follows a similar pattern at each location, though specific schedules and activities vary from site to site. Here, for example, is the daily schedule for the program at Francis Scott Key Elementary School:

2:40-3:00 pm	Snack
3:00-4:00 pm	Academics
4:00-5:00 pm	Homework/tutorial
5:00-6:00 pm	Enrichment

Each afternoon begins with snack time for the students followed by an hour of “academics” that focuses on reading and math activities. Then students do their homework or get individual tutoring. The final part of the day is devoted to “enrichment” activities that include arts and crafts, cooking, games/recreation, origami, martial arts and traditional Chinese dance.

The after-school program offered at A.P. Giannini Middle School also offers a snack, homework assistance and enrichment activities. However, it includes a service learning program that provides opportunities for students to volunteer in the community.

The key role of the Experience Corps volunteers is to get to know the students individually and develop supportive relationships. The program’s field coordinator believes that it can be easier to develop this kind of relationship in an after-school

program than in programs during school hours because they are less formal and more flexible. The program has also made an effort to take advantage of special skills or interests of the volunteers. For example, one volunteer who was a Parcheesi champion has been teaching students how to play the game. But the key to the effectiveness of the program, according to its director, is the relationship-building that can be cultivated particularly well during after-school hours.

Washington, DC

The program in Washington, DC is the smallest and most focused of the four Experience Corps after-school programs. The Experience Corps operates in-school programs at five locations in the city, but offers an after-school program at just one location – the Birney Elementary School in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington (Experience Corps volunteers also work in three classrooms during school hours at Birney).

The participants in the after-school program are boys in the 5th and 6th grades at the school. Many of them come from low income, single parent homes. Few have strong male role models. In order to address these challenges, the program pairs each boy with a male mentor who meets with him throughout the school year. The program began three years ago with six mentors and nine 6th grade boys. The next year, the program expanded to include 12 mentors and 20 students, and in 2002, the program included 14 volunteers working with a total of 22 students. The program operates after-school three days a week. Some of the students meet with their tutors once a week, while others meet twice a week.

The goal of the mentors is to become “big buddies” with the students, offering friendship and support. The mentors make it clear that they will not interfere with the students’ home lives. As the director of the Washington Experience Corps program puts it, the goal of the mentors is “to show these kids that there are stable, caring males who aren’t knuckleheads.”

The mentors are an impressive group. They include a battalion chief of the Washington DC fire department, a retired Capitol Hill policeman, and a former member of the DC police department. Another mentor is a particularly inspiring role model for the boys: he worked in the construction industry and taught himself to read as an adult.

In contrast to the other Experience Corps after-school programs, the Birney School program is relatively unstructured. The mentors talk with their students and will help them with homework if asked, but there is no fixed schedule of activities. The mentors have organized a number of field trips for the students. Recently, for example, the mentors took the students to a Washington Wizards professional basketball game. For some of the students, this was one of the first times they had been outside of their immediate neighborhood.

Senior Volunteers and 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The development of after-school programs got a major boost with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This bill included funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. As a result of this legislation,

funding for after-school programs increased from just \$40 million in 1998 to \$1 billion in 2002, with further increases in funding up to \$2.5 billion a year scheduled for future years. As of 2001, the 21st CCLC program was serving some 1.2 million children in 6,000 public schools in more than 1,400 communities across the country.¹³

The federal legislation authorizing the 21st CCLC program defines a Community Learning Center as a program that provides students with “opportunities for literacy and related educational development” outside of regular school hours. The legislation includes a list of 12 “authorized activities” for which federal funding can be used. It is noteworthy, that one of these activities is “tutoring (*including those provided by senior citizen volunteers*) and mentoring programs” [emphasis added] – the only item on the list that identifies a particular group that can be involved in an activity. This language suggests that there can be a special role for older volunteers in after-school programs.

IV. RECRUITING, TRAINING AND SUPPORTING OLDER VOLUNTEERS

The challenge of recruiting volunteers is a major concern to virtually all programs that engage volunteers. And, of course, the challenge is not merely to recruit enough volunteers, but to recruit the *right* volunteers whose interests and abilities are compatible with a program's needs.

Recruitment

Recruiting older adults holds some special challenges. In their book on *Older Volunteers*, Lucy Rose Fischer and Kay Banister Schaffer discuss what they call the "paradox of access" to older adults:

Older people potentially are more accessible as volunteers because they have diminished responsibilities in work and family roles and therefore have more time for volunteering. But without these roles, older persons are less accessible for recruitment because they are not associated with the institutions and organizations from which volunteers are commonly recruited.¹⁴

The reality of this paradox was confirmed by the volunteer coordinator for a large after-school program that includes several hundred volunteers who was interviewed for this paper. When she was asked how many volunteers in her program were seniors, she stated that there were very few because she had no idea where to find older volunteers. This section provides some ideas on how and where to recruit older volunteers.

Recruitment strategies. Many of the strategies that work for recruiting younger volunteers are also appropriate for recruiting older volunteers. For example, there is almost universal agreement among those who recruit volunteers, both young and old, that the most effective single strategy is word of mouth. But successful recruitment of new volunteers is almost always a continuous process that makes use of a variety of techniques and channels. Understanding the psychology and motivations of older adults can be very helpful in designing campaigns to attract senior volunteers.

People who volunteer in a program tend to be the most articulate, most convincing spokespeople for the benefits of participating in that program. Some programs take advantage of this fact by basing their recruitment efforts around encouraging current volunteers to recruit others. One way to do this is by holding contests to reward those who recruit the most new volunteers or by providing recognition to successful recruiters.

While word of mouth is widely viewed as the most valuable recruitment tool, it has its limits. As Fischer and Schaffer state, "programs that recruit only through personal contacts are unlikely to grow and/or will tend to recruit only from a narrowly defined population."¹⁵ In other words, if the current volunteers in a program are predominantly younger people, it is unlikely that they will be a good source for recruiting older volunteers. The most successful recruitment campaigns use multiple channels, in addition to word of mouth, to reach potential volunteers.

Volunteers for after-school programs tend to come from the neighborhoods in which the programs operate, which means that recruitment campaigns should be locally focused. For example, the Experience Corps program coordinators at each school site in San Francisco have the primary responsibility for recruiting volunteers from their neighborhood. They do this through such means as placing ads in community newspapers, attending local fairs and festivals and speaking at meetings of local organizations. The Experience Corps in Philadelphia (which runs a volunteer tutoring program during school hours) has targeted recruitment efforts at local senior centers and retirement communities, which has allowed it to recruit individuals who might not respond to traditional campaigns. A group of Spanish-speaking seniors were recruited from a Philadelphia senior center to help bilingual elementary school students gain a greater appreciation of their cultural heritage.¹⁶

Senior Corps. This federally-sponsored program can be an excellent source of volunteers for after-school programs. Senior Corps is an umbrella organization that operates three programs under the Corporation for National and Community Service that recruit older adults and place them in a variety of community service assignments. Two of the Senior Corps programs – Foster Grandparents and RSVP – recruit volunteers to work with a wide range of nonprofit service projects, including after-school programs (the third Senior Corps program, Senior Companions, links volunteers with the frail elderly who need assistance.) Each of these programs operates through offices located in all 50 states and in many local communities.

- ◆ **Foster Grandparents.** Participants in this program serve as “mentors, tutors and caregivers for at-risk children and youth with special needs through a variety of community organizations, including schools.” The program is open to people over age 60 with limited incomes (the minimum age may be lowered to 55 under currently pending legislation). Foster Grandparents serve 20 hours per week and receive a tax-free stipend of \$2.65 an hour along with reimbursement for travel expenses, meals during service, annual physical exams, and accident and liability insurance while they are on duty.

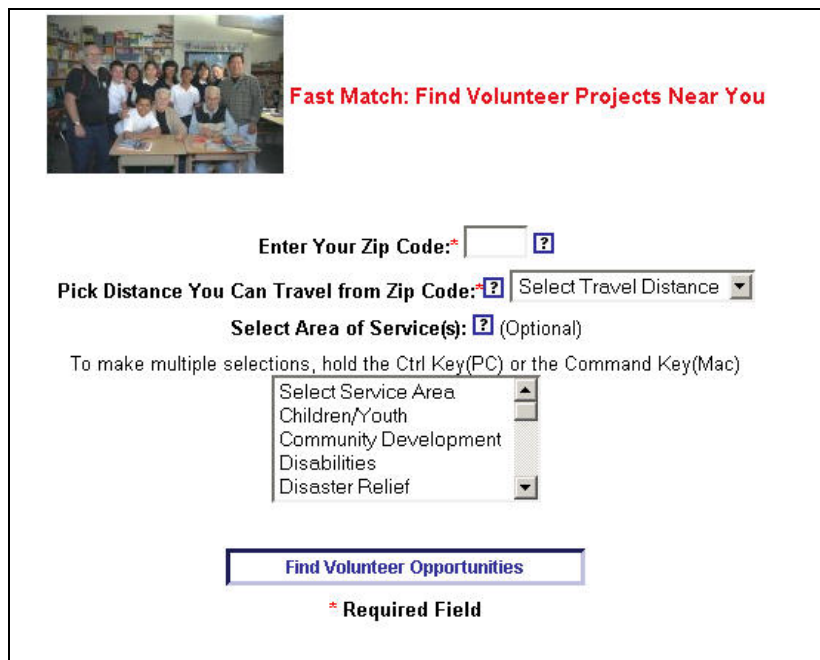
In 2001, more than 30,000 Foster Grandparents members worked with 275,000 children and teenagers across the country. Individual Foster Grandparents programs are operated by local nonprofit agencies and public agencies in communities across the country. The Foster Grandparents Web site includes contact information for local offices by state (see www.seniorcorps.org/Joining/FGP/index.html.)

- ◆ **RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program).** RSVP helps match older adults with a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Unlike, Foster Grandparents, RSVP is open to all people age 55 and over with no income limit. Participants receive no payments, although sponsoring organizations may reimburse them for some costs incurred during service. No set amount of time is required, with participants serving from a few hours a month to almost full-time.

In fiscal 2001, approximately 480,000 volunteers contributed an average of four hours per week at some 65,000 local nonprofit organizations. Like Foster Grandparents, RSVP programs are coordinated through a network of offices in many communities (a listing by state can be found at www.seniorcorps.org/Joining/RSVP/index.html.)

The Corporation for National and Community Service runs a Web site called “JoinSeniorService.org” that provides older adults with information about opportunities to volunteer across the country. The Web site includes a “fast match” page where potential volunteers can enter their Zip code and the type of opportunity they are seeking, and get a list of appropriate projects located near them (See Figure 2). For example, a search that requested information about projects within ten miles of San Francisco related to “children/youth” yielded a list of 11 different projects (including the San Francisco Experience Corps). The Web site is located at www.joinseniorservice.org.

FIGURE 2
“Fast Match” page at JoinSeniorService.org



Fast Match: Find Volunteer Projects Near You

Enter Your Zip Code:* ?

Pick Distance You Can Travel from Zip Code:* Select Travel Distance ▾

Select Area of Service(s): ? (Optional)

To make multiple selections, hold the Ctrl Key(PC) or the Command Key(Mac)

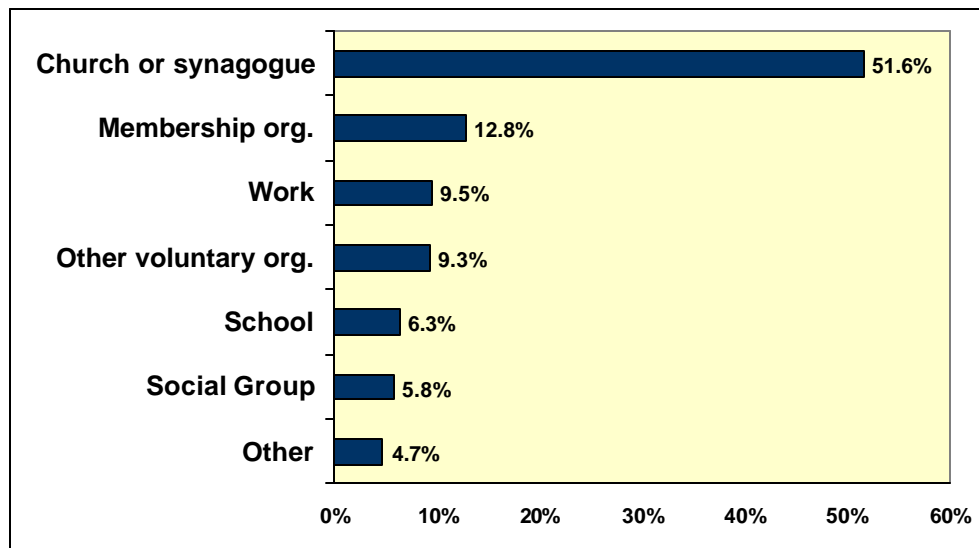
Select Service Area
 Children/Youth
 Community Development
 Disabilities
 Disaster Relief

Find Volunteer Opportunities

* Required Field

Finding a Recruiting Partner. Working with other organizations that have access to potential volunteers is another valuable recruitment strategy. Because seniors tend to be active in religious organizations, churches, synagogues and mosques can be particularly valuable potential partners for recruiting older volunteers. The Independent Sector’s *Survey of Senior Volunteers* found that churches and synagogues were more than four times as likely to be the place where older adults learn about volunteer opportunities than any other source (see Figure 3). The next best source for older volunteers is membership organizations, which demonstrates that people who are already active participants in one organization are more likely to volunteer with another organization.

FIGURE 3
Where Seniors Learned About Volunteer Opportunities



Source: *America's Senior Volunteers*, Independent Sector, June 2000

Several Experience Corps projects have developed effective partnerships with other groups in their communities. For example, the Experience Corps in Washington, DC, has developed a relationship with a local Masons Lodge, which has been the source of approximately half of the male mentors in the program at Birney Elementary School. Local Lodge members have become so committed to the program that they have expressed interest in encouraging fellow Masons in other cities to get involved with Experience Corps projects in their communities.

Using Multiple Strategies. The most successful recruitment efforts make use of multiple strategies. In Kansas City, for example, recruitment of new Experience Corps volunteers is a year-round activity. The recruitment program uses all of the techniques mentioned above and more. Each summer, the project launches a “recruitment blitz” that is focused on bringing in new volunteers for the next academic year. In addition to distributing flyers and running ads in local newspapers, the Experience Corps director runs a contest among current members to see who can recruit the most new people and offers cash prizes to those who bring in five new people.

Each spring and fall, the program director in Kansas City organizes an intergenerational social event for members of the community. Last fall, for example, older residents were invited to a “Senior Prom” at the YMCA. In the spring, a Mardi Gras party was held at for the same audience. Some of the students in the YMCA’s after-school programs helped to organize the events. The director uses these occasions to introduce seniors in the community to programs at the YMCA and to seek volunteers for the Experience Corps. A number of new Experience Corps members have been recruited from these events.

Media Campaigns. Advertising or the use of PSAs (public service announcements) or publicity through local media outlets can be useful strategies for attracting new volunteers, but their effectiveness varies widely. According to Fischer and Shaffer, “studies of recruitment have found that as few as six percent or as [many] as one-third of volunteers were attracted by media advertisements or publicity.”¹⁷

Effective media campaign are based on good market research (either formal or informal) that identifies the types of media that your target audience uses. Studies show that seniors are active readers of newspapers and also spend considerable time listening to radio and watching television. (In terms of radio, older listeners are more likely to tune into talk radio or “oldies” stations than stations that play rock music; in terms of television, older viewers are heavy viewers of news programs and news channels.)

Although seniors are one of the fastest growing groups of new users of the Internet, overall usage of the Internet by people over 65 is still well below that of younger people.¹⁸ While an Internet-based campaign may reach some seniors who are “wired,” it may be that children or grandchildren of potential volunteers are the best targets for Internet-based recruitment programs (using resources such as joinseniorservice.org described on page 17).

Shaping Recruitment Messages. No matter what channels are used, it is helpful in formulating a recruitment appeal to focus on the needs and interests of your target audience rather than on your program’s needs. Here, from the National Senior Service Corps’ *Seniors for Schools Effective Practices Guidebook*, are some of the motivations that older adults are likely to have for volunteering that can be linked to participation in an after-school program:

- A **need to connect with others** around issues that are important to society, such as children, education, and benefiting their community.
- A desire **to get involved for social reasons** – to develop and expand a social network or outlet. Sometimes volunteers have recently lost a spouse or a loved one and are looking for ways to get involved with a positive, encouraging group of people.
- A need **to feel useful and valuable** in the absence of a routine they used to experience in the workplace or as a homemaker/mother.
- Some volunteers have **retired from teaching positions** and appreciate the opportunity to work one-on-one with children, which provides them with the freedom to give their personal attention to a child without the kinds of demands found in the traditional teacher role.
- Many retirees find themselves surprised by how soon they feel burdened by **too much time on their hands**. They may become restless and even fatigued from lack of things to do and lack of demands on their time. The opportunity to schedule their time during the week is a real boost to both their physical and mental well-being.¹⁹

As noted above, “working with children and youth” ranked as the most popular choice of volunteer activities among older adults in the 2002 Civic Ventures survey (see Table 3, page 6), while projects involving “education/tutoring” was the top choice in the AARP survey of volunteers in New York. This suggests that focusing on the opportunities for working with children in an after-school program should be an effective recruitment strategy. At the same time, recruiters should be aware that some potential older volunteers may be concerned about such issues as personal safety and their ability to connect with young people. Testimony from happy older volunteers in your program can be a powerful tool to provide reassurance to potential recruits.

Screening potential volunteers is an important part of the recruitment process. In many cases, programs that involve direct contact of volunteers with children are required to include criminal history record checks as part of their screening process.²⁰ But screening can also help ensure that volunteers who are selected are likely to be successful.

A good screening process can determine whether volunteers have a positive attitude and a serious level of commitment. This process is often a two-way street that involves providing potential volunteers with information about what is involved in a program as well as seeking information about the volunteers. People interested in joining Experience Corps in Kansas City are invited to spend a day observing the program to help them decide if it is what they really want to do. They are then invited to a “mini-orientation” that provides more information about the program and what volunteers do. Each activity is described so that the potential volunteers get an overview of the specific opportunities available to them. They are then invited to fill out an application, and about half of those who attend the orientation do so. Those who submit applications are interviewed to explore why they are interested in the program and what they would like to do.

Matching volunteers to the right assignment will help determine whether they are effective in and satisfied with their roles. In Boston, new Experience Corps volunteers are given an opportunity to observe what goes on at the site where they will work to make sure they are comfortable with those activities. In San Francisco, program staff discovered that some participants were put off by the prospect of having to help middle school students with math assignments but were attracted by the prospect of working with elementary school students on arts and crafts projects. In other cases, the key to success has been to enable volunteers to make use of their personal interests or special skills. One volunteer in San Francisco turned out to be a Parcheesi champion and has been teaching students how to play the game, which provides them with an enjoyable intellectual challenge.

Training

Providing volunteers with high quality orientation and training is also critical to ensure that they are prepared to take on the challenges they will face once they are “on the job.” According to a study of volunteer management, “a mistake that far too many programs make is to underestimate the training needs of their volunteers.”²¹ This can be especially true for older adults who may not be familiar with the issues that may arise in working with young students. New Experience Corps members go through training programs that last from a half-day to a full day or more.

In some cases, specialized training can be important to introduce new volunteers to specific programs or approaches used in an after-school program. In Boston, for example, volunteer training includes instruction on the “Reading Coaches” tutoring methodology that is used in its program. In Washington, DC, a professional consultant was hired to provide “hands on” training in how to be a mentor. The training includes role-playing exercises and discussions on how to set appropriate boundaries with mentees.

In San Francisco, new volunteers participate in eight hours of training over two days. The training includes information about tutoring and mentoring, ideas and suggestions for working with “challenging students or behavior” as well as creative ways for working with youth. There is also a segment on diversity and a “time line” exercise to help older volunteers to be aware of the ways in which the world in which today’s youth are growing up differ from their world. Another important element of the training involves helping the volunteers to understand what kind of improvement or achievement is reasonable to expect from the students with whom they will be working. Citywide training is followed by an orientation to the individual site that includes local policies and procedures and rules for maintaining discipline among the students.

Support

Ongoing support for volunteers is also important. Most Experience Corps programs hold monthly team meetings that provide additional training and offer volunteers a chance to talk about their successes as well as the challenges they are facing. This kind of support gives volunteers a chance to reflect on and learn from their experiences and get help from peers and program staff when they need it.

“Job reviews” can be useful for volunteers as well as for paid employees. They can help volunteers appreciate what they are contributing as well as recognizing areas where they can improve their performance. Experience Corps members in San Francisco receive regular feedback, both orally and in written form, from the site coordinators about their performance. A formal review takes place with each volunteer at the end of the school year.

Finally, providing volunteers with **recognition** for their contributions can play a vital role in keeping them motivated. Annual dinners for volunteers, invitations to attend performances or other cultural events, awards for service, and write-ups of the activities of individual volunteers in local publications can all provide “psychic rewards” that let volunteers know that their contributions are noticed and appreciated.

V. CONCLUSION

When asked about the role of volunteers in her program, the coordinator of one after-school program replied that “the [paid staff] develop and run their program, *but the volunteers provide the magic.*”

The goal of this report has been to raise awareness of the enormous potential of older adults as volunteers in after-school programs, and to encourage program providers to consider making greater use of this resource.

As we have seen, seniors are particularly well-suited to act as tutors and mentors to young people. By taking the time to focus on the needs of individual students and provide them with support and encouragement, older adults can have a great impact on the lives they touch. And the participation of older volunteers is not only good for the students, but it can provide the volunteers themselves with tangible benefits by keeping them active and engaged in addressing real social needs.

America’s seniors are already contributing billions of hours each year as volunteers. But the number of active older volunteers could be increased substantially if more of them were asked to volunteer. And given the popularity of “working with children and youth” and “education/tutoring” as volunteer options for seniors, it seems likely that after-school programs could attract a large share of this population. What is needed for this to happen is for volunteer recruitment campaigns and training and support activities to be attuned to the interests of potential older volunteers and to let them know that they are wanted.

Endnotes

- ¹ *American's Senior Volunteers*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector, June 2000, page 1. These results come from a biennial national survey on "Giving and Volunteering in the United States" that is conducted by Independent Sector. The survey included 810 respondents age 55 and older.
- ² Peter D. Hart Research Associates, *Making a Commitment to Community Service: Older Americans Set a New Priority for Retirement*. San Francisco, CA: Civic Ventures, August 2002. The survey was conducted in July 2002, among 600 Americans age 50 to 75, including 300 regular volunteers and 300 non-volunteers.
- ³ Peter D. Hart Research Associates, *The New Face of Retirement: Older Americans, Civic Engagement, and the Longevity Revolution*. San Francisco, CA: Civic Ventures, 1999.
- ⁴ Joseph Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch, *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Public/Private Ventures, September 2000. Available at <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/makingadiff.html>.
- ⁵ Robert W. Blum, and P. M. Rinehart, "Reducing the Risk: Connections That Make a Difference in the Lives of Youth." Minneapolis, MN: Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, University of Minnesota, 1997.
- ⁶ Kathryn T. McLearn, Diane Colasanto, Cathy Schoen, and Michele Y. Shapiro, "Mentoring Matters: A National Survey of Adults Mentoring Young People," in *Contemporary Issues in Mentoring*, Jean B. Grossman, editor. Public/Private Ventures, June 1999. Available online at http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/issuesinmentoring_pdf.html.
- ⁷ Jean Rhodes, *Stand By Me*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, page 52.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Jennifer H. Sauer, "Volunteerism: A Survey Of New York AARP Members," Washington, DC: AARP, January 2001, page 11.
- ¹⁰ *Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time*. National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Wellesley College, MA, June 2000, pages 10-12.
- ¹¹ Andrea S. Taylor and Jeanette Bressler, *Mentoring Across Generations: Partnerships for Positive Youth Development*. New York City, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000.
- ¹² "New York City Beacon Initiative" at www.nccic.org/ccpartnerships/profiles/beacons.htm
- ¹³ See www.ed.gov/21stcclc.
- ¹⁴ Lucy Rose Fischer and Kay Banister Schaffer, *Older Volunteers: A Guide to Research and Practice*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1993, page 67.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, page 70.
- ¹⁶ Jean Baldwin Grossman and Kathryn Furano, "Making the Most of Volunteers," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, School of Law, Duke University, Volume 62-4, pp 199-281.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, page 76.
- ¹⁸ See, for example, Susannah Fox, *Wired Seniors: A fervent few, inspired by family ties*. Pew Internet and American Life Project, September 9, 2001. Available at www.pewinternet.org/reports/toc.asp?Report=40.
- ¹⁹ *Seniors for Schools Effective Practices Guidebook*, National Senior Service Corps/Corporation for National Service, April 2000, page I.7.
- ²⁰ In 1996, the Corporation for National Service (the agency that administers the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs) required that all programs that involve "substantial, direct contact with children" must conduct criminal record checks to the extent permitted by state and local law.
- ²¹ Jean Baldwin Grossman and Kathryn Furano, "Making the Most of Volunteers"

APPENDIX
Location of Experience Corps Projects

Baltimore, MD

Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions,
The Center on Aging and Health
2024 E. Monument Street, Suite 2-600
Baltimore, MD 21205
Phone: 410-502-5495

Boston, MA*

Generations Incorporated
59 Temple Place, Suite 200
Boston, MA 02111
617-423-6633

Cleveland, OH

RSVP of Greater Cleveland
4614 Prospect Ave., Suite 205
Cleveland, OH 44103
216-391-9500, ext. 19

Durham, NC

The Center for Documentary Studies
1317 Pettigrew St.
Durham, NC 27705
919-660-3694

Indianapolis, IN

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana
300 East Fall Creek Parkway N. Drive
Suite 400
Indianapolis, IN 46205-4279
317-921-1791

Kansas City, MO*

YMCA of Greater Kansas City
3800 E. Linwood Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64128
816-923-5675

Minneapolis, MN

Senior Resources, Inc.
2021 E. Hennepin, Suite 130
Minneapolis, MN 55413-2723
612-617-7827

New York City, NY

Community Service Society of New York
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

105 E. 22nd Street, #401
New York, NY 10010
212-614-5499

United Neighborhood Houses
70 West 36th Street, 5th floor
New York, NY 10018
212-967-0322, ext. 316

Philadelphia, PA

Temple University
Center for Intergenerational Learning
1601 N. Broad St., Room 206
Philadelphia, PA 19122
215-204-8057

Phoenix, AZ

Area Agency on Aging
1366 East Thomas Road
Suite 108
Phoenix, AZ 85014
602-264-2255

Southeast Texas

Southeast Texas Regional Planning
Commission
2210 Eastex Freeway
Beaumont, TX 77703
409-727-2384, ext. 315

Portland, OR

Metropolitan Family Services
1808 SE Belmont
Portland, OR 97214
503-232-0007, ext. 204

San Francisco, CA*

Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center
3925 Noriega Street
San Francisco, CA 94122
415-759-3690

Washington, DC*

Experience Corps
1816 12th St., NW
Washington, DC
202-797-1150

*Operates an After-School Program

About Civic Ventures

Civic Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that works to expand the social contributions of older Americans to society, and to help transform the aging of American society into a source of individual and social renewal.

The organization seeks to tap the talents and skills of older Americans by developing avenues for meaningful service to communities. In pursuit of this mission, Civic Ventures promotes new ideas, strengthens infrastructure, and establishes and learns from new institutions:

- *Ideas*: Civic Ventures works to improve knowledge about and public awareness of efforts involving older Americans in service.
- *Infrastructure*: Civic Ventures promotes policies that enable older Americans to become involved in strengthening communities.
- *Institutions*: Civic Ventures creates more compelling opportunities for older Americans to serve their communities, in particular through the Experience Corps[®] approach.

Civic Ventures is the national office for **Experience Corps**, the organization's signature program that operates in 14 cities throughout the country. Started in 1995, the program mobilizes the time, talent, and experience of adults age 55 or older in service to communities. The initial focus has been connecting older adults with children and youth. Experience Corps provides schools and youth-serving organizations with a critical mass of older volunteers to improve academic performance and development of young people, help schools and youth-serving organizations become more caring places, strengthen ties between these institutions and surrounding neighborhoods, and enhance the well-being of the volunteers in the process.

Funders of Civic Ventures include The Atlantic Philanthropies, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Corporation for National Service, Hasbro Children's Foundation, Helen Benedict Foundation, Pinkerton Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Charles Hayden Foundation, Florence V. Burden Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, James C. Penney Foundation, and others.

Civic Ventures

139 Townsend St., Suite 505
San Francisco, CA 94107
415-430-0141

www.civicventures.org