

# RENEWING THE SPIRIT OF NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTHY  
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES  
COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND LABOR  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

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HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 19, 2007

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## **RENEWING THE SPIRIT OF NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

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**Thursday, April 19, 2007  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities  
Committee on Education and Labor  
Washington, DC**

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The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:30 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Carolyn McCarthy [chairwoman of the subcommittee] Presiding.

Present: Representatives McCarthy, Shea-Porter, Kucinich, Sarbanes, Platts, McKeon and Davis.

Staff Present: Aaron Albright, Press Secretary; Tylease Alli, Hearing Clerk; Alejandra Ceja, Senior Budget/Appropriations Analyst; Denise Forte, Director of Education Policy; Lamont Ivey, Staff Assistant, Education; Deborah Koolbeck, Policy Advisor for Subcommittee on Healthy Families; Ann-Frances Lambert, Administrative Assistant to Director of Education Policy; Stephanie Moore, General Counsel; Joe Novotny, Chief Clerk; Lisette Partelow, Staff Assistant, Education; Rachel Racusen, Deputy Communications Director; Kathryn Bruns, Minority Legislative Assistant; Linda Stevens, Minority Chief Clerk/Assistant to the General Counsel; and Brad Thomas, Minority Professional Staff Member.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I call the hearing to order. A quorum is present. The hearing of the subcommittee will come to order. Welcome to the second hearing of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittees on national service. The purpose of today's hearing is explore innovative programs with a focus on opportunities for service to assist in keeping America competitive in the global knowledge economy and help renew the spirit of national and community services in this country.

Before we begin, I would like everyone to take a moment to ensure that your cell phones and BlackBerrys are on silence, which—thank you for reminding me. So please, everybody, cell phones, BlackBerrys off or just put them on vibrate.

Pursuant to committee Rule 12(a), any member may submit an opening statement in writing which will be made part of the permanent record.

I now recognize myself, followed by the gentleman from Tennessee, Congressman Davis, for an opening statement.

I am really pleased that the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee is holding its second hearing on national service dur-

ing National Volunteer Week. Congress celebrated National Volunteer Week through a resolution introduced by my colleague, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire, Congresswoman Shea-Porter, and passed by a floor vote yesterday. I hope that during this week there are celebrations of volunteering in each community across the Nation. No one can dispute the importance of volunteering and service to the lives of those who are the recipients of the service.

Nor can we dispute the benefits experienced by those serving others. I would like to thank our very distinguished panel for their testimony and for their commitment to service.

We have seen a rise of volunteering in the United States over time, with strong growth and momentum after 9/11, in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; to this day, there is a strong volunteer presence in the gulf region working on recovery. We will hear today about the impact of volunteering in the gulf and using one's occupation and dedication to service to raise the level of awareness of volunteering and service in our Nation. Last year, 61.2 million Americans volunteered in the United States—26.7 percent of our population—serving an estimated 8.1 billion hours. Some have put a dollar value on the volunteers' time and estimated last year's service to be worth \$152 billion to this Nation.

We are a giving people. In fact, 5.3 million Americans worked with their neighbors to improve their communities without going through a formal organization and perhaps did not even consider that they were volunteering or doing service. They were just doing what needed to be done. It is our nature to help each other, to work together, to keep our communities safe, clean and inviting, and to offer service and assistance to those in the highest need around us.

However, disturbingly, more people volunteered in 2005 than they did in 2006. In fact, one-third of those who volunteered in 2005 did not volunteer in 2006. It is time for us to renew our sense of service.

Volunteering and service are quite possibly the way we resolve some of our communities', and our Nation's, most challenging problems.

For example, to remain competitive in the global knowledge economy, we must re-ignite the enthusiasm for science and technology and its importance to our daily lives among our entire citizenship. But most importantly, it is in our students. One indicator of this is, NASA is concerned that in the future it will be unable to hire enough scientists, engineers and technicians to fill the positions held by the soon retiring baby boomers. Education is clearly part of the solution. But we cannot place all of this on the teachers.

We must look to those baby boomers and their peers to start volunteering now and in after-school programs, Saturday programs and summer programs that will engage youth in math, science and technology and, yes, service.

I think if these scientists and engineers heard the call to civic duty and had the clear sense they were directly affecting students' lives and the future of our Nation, they would compete with each other for any service or volunteer placement offered. Today we will hear of programs that do just give scientists, engineers, technicians and mathematicians the chance to serve and remain in service to our youth and therefore our Nation.

Service must be meaningful, create positive change in our communities and completed with a well managed program with necessary training and recognition for the service completed.

We must give volunteers and those who serve a reason to return and serve again. Today we will hear of being work being done in Atlanta Georgia to engage AmeriCorps alumni after their year of service has ended to continue to live by the AmeriCorps commitment to service. I hope from that testimony we will apply ideas to as many service programs as possible.

I am looking forward to learning from this and other hearings we will hold on this issue, how we mobilize more volunteers to ensure a brighter future for all of our American youth, engage students in communities and harness the experience of our seniors. With that, now I yield to the distinguished member, Mr. Davis, for an opening statement.

Mr. DAVIS. Good morning. I would like to welcome you to a hearing on renewing the spirit of National and community service. Before I begin I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the Virginia Tech community. Blacksburg is just up the road from my northeast Tennessee district. And all of our thoughts and prayers go to the Hokie family.

This hearing is a second in a series addressing community service and volunteerism. Today we will focus on organizations that are expanding community services through innovative methods. We will have the opportunity to hear from individuals who energize citizens to volunteer at both the local and national levels.

Through the efforts of individuals like these, the organization that represent and the volunteers that make these organizations strong, we are reminded that community service takes place through efforts both large and small throughout this country.

Every day, countless individuals of all backgrounds and ages inspire others through their efforts to address the common concerns of our neighborhoods, communities, Nation and world.

Our community has seen inspiring examples of our citizens' willingness to serve in the wake of tragedy.

Volunteerism isn't just about responding to disaster. It is also about lifting a hand to help a neighbor, teaching a child to read, restoring a neglected park and numerous other acts of good will that reaffirm our community's humanity.

I look forward to hearing the testimony regarding innovative ways which service programs are using volunteers to provide assistance to children and their families.

It is important this subcommittee take the experiences related to this panel into consideration when crafting legislation to reauthorize the Federal community service programs.

Finally, I would like to thank our distinguished panel for joining us today and providing us with their insight and firsthand experiences with community service programs. With that, I yield back to chairwoman McCarthy. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Davis follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. David Davis, a Representative in Congress  
From the State of Tennessee**

Good morning. I would like to welcome you to our hearing on "Renewing the Spirit of National and Community Service." Before I begin, I would like to express my

heartfelt condolences to the Virginia Tech community. Blacksburg is just up the road from my northeast Tennessee district, and all of our thoughts and prayers go out to the Hokie family.

This hearing is the second in a series of hearings addressing community service and volunteerism. Today we will focus on organizations that are expanding community service through innovative methods. We will have the opportunity to hear from individuals who energize citizens to volunteer at both the local and national levels.

Through the efforts of individuals like these, the organizations they represent, and the volunteers that make those organizations work, we are reminded that community service takes place through efforts both large and small throughout this country. Every day, countless individuals of all backgrounds and ages inspire others through their efforts to address the common concerns of our neighborhoods, communities, nation, and world.

Our country has seen the inspiring example of our citizens' willingness to serve in the wake of tragedy. But volunteerism isn't just about responding to disaster. It is also about lifting a hand to help a neighbor, teaching a child to read, restoring a neglected park, and numerous other acts of goodwill that reaffirm our common humanity.

I look forward to hearing testimony regarding innovative ways which service programs are using volunteers to provide assistance to children and their families. It is important that this Subcommittee take the experiences relayed by this panel into consideration when crafting legislation to reauthorize the federal community service programs.

Finally, I would like to thank our distinguished panel for joining us today and providing us with their insight and first hand experiences with community service programs. With that, I yield back to Chairwoman McCarthy.

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Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Davis. I notice that our ranking member, Mr. Howard McKeon from California has joined us and also, my colleague from New Hampshire, Ms. Carol Shea-Porter. Thank you for joining us.

Today we will be hearing from a panel of witnesses. Your testimonies will proceed in the order that I introduce you. I would like to introduce our first witness, Robert Newman, cast member of the CBS day time drama Guiding Light. In January, Robert led the entire cast and crew of Guiding Light on a week long trip to Biloxi, Mississippi, as part of their 70th Anniversary Find Your Light celebration. After 1 week of service, they handed the new residents the keys to a fully furnished house. In addition, throughout 2007, Guiding Light is encouraging fans to volunteer with their actors from the show in a different city each month through a partnership with hands-on network. I look forward to hearing on the impact of you, your fans and national service in the endeavor.

We will next hear from Susan Stroud. Ms. Stroud is the executive director of Innovations in Civic Preparation, an organization which supports the development of program and policy innovations in National and community service with a focus on youth service.

Ms. Stroud will speak to us about the importance and the benefit of engaging middle school youth in service and programs such a Summer of Service program. Because I am such a supporter of engaging youth and creating meaningful opportunities for youth to grow and explore opportunities in life, I look forward to hearing from your testimony.

We will then hear from Robert Purifico—am I saying that correctly, or am I near it?

Mr. PURIFICO. Yes, you are.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you. He is a former teacher and the current President of Destination Imagination, an organization

which seeks to inspire its participants of its diverse programs to learn the skills necessary to success in the 21st century.

In the global knowledge economy, including critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, leadership and social skills. In particular, I hope to hear of the opportunity you have for youth to do community problem solving and service learning environment.

Our next witness is Marcia Brown from Atlanta, Georgia. Ms. Brown works with hands on Atlanta where she manages a school-based AmeriCorps program. However, we will hear how she works to keep AmeriCorps alumni involved in service after completing their term of service.

Perhaps she holds the answer to how we can keep the one-third of volunteers from leaving service after 1 year, and then we can apply that to possibly teaching as well.

Now I would like to yield to my colleague, Congresswoman Shear-Porter, to introduce our next witness.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you. It would be my honor to introduce Paul Gudonis, who is the President of FIRST, based in New Hampshire, and that is For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. And he is sitting in for Mr. Dean Kamen, who has been very, very active, who is the founder of FIRST in 1992. Mr. Gudonis has 25 years of leadership experience in the information technology and communication industries. And he has been a consistent advocate for improving the impact of technology and education in our society.

FIRST had a very humble beginning in a high school gym in Manchester, and it now reaches over 100,000 students and holds competitions in the Georgia Dome, has over 60,000 volunteers. FIRST designs accessible, innovative programs that build not only science and technology skills and interest but also self-confidence, leadership and life skills.

It also reaches out to students in elementary schools through high school, and I am proud to say that this is now an activity for people, for students who for many years did not have their outlet. They saw the sports teams, and they saw other teams, but they did not have their outlet. And it is true, a lot of people who didn't even know they had the talent. So they are creating tomorrow's leaders, and I thank him.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I thank you. I also would like to recognize that Mr. Sarbanes from Maryland has joined us.

Before we all begin, let me explain our lighting system. You see the little boxes in front of you. We have a 5-minute rule. Everyone, including members, is limited to 5 minutes of presentation or questioning. The green light is illuminated when you begin to speak. And when you see the yellow light, it means you have 1 minute remaining. When you see the red light, it means your time is expired and you need to conclude your testimony. Please be certain as you testify to turn on and speak into the microphones in front of you.

We will now hear from our first witness Mr. Newman.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT NEWMAN, ACTOR, THE GUIDING  
LIGHT**

Mr. NEWMAN. Thank you very much, Congresswoman McCarthy, and thank you to this committee for allowing me the opportunity to be here today.

Guiding Light is the longest running show in the history of broadcast. We celebrated our 70th year in 2007. We began on radio in January of 1937, went to television in the mid-1950s. While other shows are celebrating their 100th episode, we—well, I can tell you that tomorrow I am shooting episode 15,137.

The question that came upon us last year was what to do, how to celebrate something like that. Our executive producer, a woman by the name of Ellen Wheeler, where most producers are probably coming up with an idea of a big party in Manhattan, she came up with an idea of a year of service, of volunteerism, of giving back to the community that has supported Guiding Light so wonderfully over the years. We already had a relationship with Hands On New York. She spoke with them. And she—and they in turn sent her over to Hands On Network.

And we have developed a partnership with that group, the idea being that we would put together 12 events, one a month, that would be all about service and volunteerism. In January, we did something that most programs would not even think of doing. We shut down for a week. We took the entire cast and most of the crew down to Biloxi, Mississippi, to work with Hands On Gulf Coast. We built three houses while we were there during that week, three houses in different stages of development.

It was an extraordinary experience for us. We also brought with us camera crews and shot a documentary style piece that we showed during one of our regular air times on Valentine's day in February.

What was clear during this time in the gulf coast, first of all, as I am sure you are all aware, there is still such an extraordinary need down there. People are living in trailers. Their houses are not being fixed. Their houses are not being rebuilt. Without organizations like Hands On Network, for instance, the three houses that we worked on would not have work done on them now. The one house that I worked on, the drywall house, a woman by the name of Gerta, in her 80s, a German woman, has been living in her FEMA trailer for a year and a half. This month she will be moving into that house. Without Hands On Network, I don't think she would be doing that. In fact, I am quite certain she wouldn't be doing that.

The other part of our program now has been 11 more events that will occur on a little bit of a smaller basis in the sense that not all of our actors will be going down. Only three or four will be going down. But, in this case, fans can go to our Web site, [findyourlight.net](http://findyourlight.net), and volunteer to work alongside of our actors in these events. We have about 100 fans that can work—that we are allowing to work for each event. We will also have a waiting list throughout the entire year of 100 to 150 people beyond that. So what started as a small idea from our executive producer, 80 people went down in January. Hundreds of people have gone down since then. We have already done two events, one in Atlanta and

one in Virginia. And we have hundreds of more people that are signed up to go out throughout the rest of the year, literally thousands of people.

And many of those people have already—I have talked to many of those people already, and many of them are volunteering for other events. It is very clear to me that people want to do something. The world is a crazy place right now. We watch our television sets. We feel like there is not a whole lot that we can do. But people do want to do something. They want to do something in a very physical way where they are helping out in some sense.

Our program, in some crazy way, has now become a year-long commercial for volunteerism. In fact, back when we started in radio in 1937, the program would begin with that crazy soap opera music that we all know, da da da and then you would hear the voice of Arthur Peterson, who played the character of Reverend Rutledge in those early years. And he would say these words: There is a destiny that makes us brothers. None goes his way alone. All that we send into the lives of others comes back into our own.

We have now incorporated those words, it is a poem by Edwin Markham, into our opening again. If you go to our show now and watch our opening, you will see a montage of hands coming together and holding on to each other. You will hear those words. And at the at the end of every show, we also have a small piece that guides viewers to the hands on the Web site and to our [findyourlight.net](http://findyourlight.net) Web site.

Again, a small idea has now touched thousands of people who are touching thousands of other people.

[The statement of Mr. Newman follows:]

#### **Prepared Statement of Robert Newman, Actor and Volunteer**

Over the years I have volunteered for a variety of things through my church; working with teens as a youth leader for 6 years; doing “shortterm missions” work; and even spending 10 days working with children in Cochabamba, Bolivia. I’ve also given a great deal of time to various charities over the years to help raise funds. But perhaps my most profound volunteer experience was during a recent trip to Biloxi, MS. As part of Guiding Light’s 70th anniversary, our entire cast and crew made the journey from New York in January to work alongside volunteers at Hands On Gulf Coast.

Hands On Gulf Coast has been housing volunteers since September 2005 as part of a disaster relief project of Hands On Network. More than 5,000 volunteers have gutted homes, installed playgrounds, refurbished schools, and touched lives. Their work has been critical to the recovery efforts and they have been recognized as the premier provider of volunteer labor for the area.

For a week, we were just like thousands of other individuals who came through the doors of Hands On—eager to invest some sweat equity to help our fellow Americans in a time of critical need. Upon first sight, the scale of the damage was incomparable, but the magnitude of the desire that the Hands On longer term volunteers displayed was profound and inspiring. Many young people had walked away from college, their families, and their lives to be a part of the recovery. Sacrificing daily comforts to aid a region still healing from Hurricane Katrina. They spoke of their willingness to help as more than just volunteering. This was their civic duty. One young volunteer, Luc Lamarache, said to me, “I just can’t imagine anything else I could be doing right now that would be this important.”

Like many people, the Guiding Light team was anxious about what they were getting into by volunteering for this experience. They posed common questions about how they would fit in, get involved, and make a meaningful contribution. We didn’t really have construction experience, yet here we were to work on reconstructing homes for

Biloxi residents. Our fears were allayed almost immediately after arriving on site. We were divided into smaller groups and placed in the hands of capable Volunteer

Leaders who showed us what to do lending a helping hand when needed. Within a very short time, we were well taught, empowered, equipped and ready to engage.

I personally spoke with many residents, young and old. It quickly became clear to me that without Hands On and other disaster relief organizations to fill the void there is little hope. That fact crystallized for me as I spoke with an elderly resident in Biloxi called Gerda. In her young life she had fled Europe because of the oppression of the Nazi's and made her home in East Biloxi. In the months following Hurricane Katrina, she came to believe in her heart that God had forgotten her. Stuck in her FEMA trailer with scarce resources to start rebuilding on her own, she had lost hope. Since volunteers from Hands On reached out to her she has been overwhelmed by the tremendous outpouring of support. Her "angels," as she affectionately calls them, spend hours every day repairing her home. Guiding Light played a part in rebuilding her home. I personally worked in her home with my group. Over the course of our week there, we insulated and sheetrocked the entire house. Later this month she will be moving back into her home—something that we are so proud to have been a part of—restoring hope by renewing a sense of a future where life can still get better.

When the Valentine's Day episode of Guiding Light aired across the country telling people the story of our week in Biloxi, we touched people everywhere by shedding light on the immense need that continues in the Gulf Coast. To our fans, we demonstrated how volunteering was not something for the young, for the skilled, or the experienced—it was something that we could all be a part of. We helped people to overcome their fears. Over and over again I've been told by people who saw the show "hey, I can do that!" Volunteering became real to our audience and the overwhelming response since then has been proof that when people understand how much of a difference they can make, they are compelled to join.

Every month during 2007, Guiding Light will continue to work with Hands On Network affiliates inviting fans to serve alongside us on a variety of different projects. We have a growing waiting list of thousands of people who now want to share in the volunteer experience they witnessed. Hands On helped to show our fans that if a group as diverse as our cast could make it work, then there is a place for everyone to get involved.

Volunteer service has never had a more important role in our society. We are at a time in this country when people are craving some kind of stability in a world that is increasingly spinning out of control. People want to make a difference, but many of the world's problems, from the war in Iraq to the aftermath of Katrina seem so colossal that many wonder if there is anything at all they can do that will actually have an impact. People want to do something, somewhere that will give them even the smallest sense that they have made a difference. But where and how?

What I have experienced in working with Hands On is that they are making volunteering more accessible than ever—creating entry points and facilitating opportunities to engage in an experience that can utilize anyone's talents. When volunteering becomes a common experience across the nation, there is a profound transformation that takes place, not only in the act of giving, but in transforming the volunteer. That unique shared experience is key.

That's what volunteering needs to become, an automated response, not only to disasters on the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina, but in every day life. Hands On has become a vital conduit for change in communities across the country, giving ordinary citizens profound and new opportunities to serve. In Biloxi we felt the pulse of the community, and witnessed the difference that we made. What is particularly encouraging with Hands On Network is that we can continue to serve in cities around the country.

My family will be returning to Biloxi in June to continue to support the rebuilding efforts. My wife along with my teenage son and daughter watched the Biloxi episode with me. They said, "Hey, I can do that!" and are now compelled to return with me—proof that volunteering can become second nature, a responsibility of all our fellow citizens to meet the needs in our communities.

In the early radio days of Guiding Light, the show began with the following poem by Edwin Markham, read by the character of Reverend Rutledge. We have now, once again, added this poem to the opening of our show. We feel it is as relevant today as it was then.

There is a destiny that makes us brothers. None goes his way alone. All that we send into the lives of others Comes back into our own.

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Chairwoman MCCARTHY. And I thank you for that.  
Ms. Stroud.

**STATEMENT OF SUSAN E. STROUD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
INNOVATIONS IN CIVIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. STROUD. Good morning. Representative McCarthy and members of the subcommittee. I am Susan Stroud, founder and executive director of Innovations in Civic Participation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting national youth service both in the United States and abroad.

I have spent the past 25 years helping to establish organizations and programs that engage large numbers of young people in service and service learning.

I was very fortunate in 1993 to join the late Eli Segal and his team at the White House Office of National Service. Our team was charged with creating the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps.

At the corporation, I was the first director of Learn and Serve America.

I applaud the Chair and the members of the subcommittee for putting the renewing of national and community service so high on your agenda. The issue is critically important for all Americans but especially for young people whose skills and habits as lifelong active citizens are being formed.

I would like to begin by providing some general observations about scaling up the next generation of service programs.

First, there should be a continuum of service that begins in elementary school and continues through one's work, life and retirement. The commitment to serve one's community is learned, not inherited, and the skills and habits of citizenship cannot be learned entirely from a textbook. People from all backgrounds, young and old, need opportunities to practice being active and engaged citizens throughout their lifetimes.

Second, service is a strategy to meet critical needs. We all benefit from full-time stipended service which improves education, the environment, public safety and human centers.

Third, service prevents risky behavior, reengages at-risk youth and provides a way for young people to realize their potential to create positive change in their communities.

Within this context, I want to discuss very briefly one specific proposal that ICP has been working on, a Summer of Service.

This initiative fills a gap in the continuum of service by providing opportunities for middle school students in the summer months, a population for whom very few service opportunities currently exist. Children in middle school are too young to work, and they have aged out of most programs that are available to younger children. That means they are unsupervised much of the time during the summer. There is a need to fill this gap in order to prevent risky behavior at this critical transition to adolescence. Research also indicates that the transition between middle school and high school is when we see a big rise in the dropout rate. Connecting Summer of Service programs to service learning programs in schools during the academic year through Learn and Serve America would help create an academic and service bridge for these young people, especially the most vulnerable.

Developing a universally available Summer of Service program to enable all young people to participate in service as a rite of passage

would be possible, even in a tight economy, if the system were built on the existing infrastructure of service programs. Summer of Service would also be an opportunity for intergenerational service programs that would bring together seniors, young teens, older students in high schools and universities and AmeriCorps members to work together. SeniorCorps has committed to working with AmeriCorps in Learn and Serve America to make sure this happens.

As you proceed, I urge you to consider incorporating Summer of Service into your bill and to sign on as cosponsors of the Summer of Service bills that Representative DeLauro and Senators Dodd and Cochran introduced this week in the House and Senate. In looking to the next generation of service, there is a gap between young people's desire to change their communities through service and the opportunities for civic participation that are available to them. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita showed the commitment of young people to their country as many rose to the challenge and responded in large numbers to assist with rebuilding the gulf coast.

In addition to responding to natural disasters, there are many other critical needs that can be addressed through service. We need to strengthen and expand the existing framework of national service programs, such as Learn and Serve, SeniorCorps and AmeriCorps, as well as incorporate new scalable ideas.

A few examples of such ideas include a clean energy corps to fight global warming, a health corps to address unmet medical needs of 56 million Americans, an AmeriCorps CCC program to address the backlog of infrastructure and environmental needs and help employ disconnected young people, a new citizen corps for recent immigrants, a disaster readiness response and recovery corps. Pathways to Teaching is another proposal ICP has developed. We propose a program that would tap into the 500,000 current and past AmeriCorps members as a potential pool of future teachers willing to serve in the country's most challenged schools.

All of these ideas are possible, and the committee would have many partners willing to help develop them in greater detail. The committee is right to take action to renew the spirit of national and community service in America. As John Gardner said, "Freedom and responsibility, liberty and duty, that is the deal."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning, and I welcome questions.

[The statement of Ms. Stroud follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Susan Stroud, Executive Director, Innovations in Civic Participation**

*Introduction*

Good morning. Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Platts and members of the subcommittee—I am Susan Stroud, founder and Executive Director of Innovations in Civic Participation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting national service both in the US and abroad. ICP incubates ideas that will help bring national and community service to scale in the US and other countries. Madame Chair, I request permission to submit written testimony.

I have spent the past twenty-five years setting up organizations and programs that engage large numbers of young people in service—as the founding director of the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University and of Campus Compact, a national coalition of over 1,000 university and college presidents committed to civic engagement and service-learning. I was incredibly fortunate in 1993 to join the late Eli Segal and others at the White House Office of National Service and charged

with creating the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps. At the Corporation for National Service, I was the first director of Learn and Serve America.

I applaud the chair and the members of the subcommittee for putting “Renewing the Spirit of National and Community Service” so high on your agenda. The issue is critically important—for all Americans, but especially for young people, whose skills and habits as life-long active citizens are being formed.

*Context for new ideas for service*

Before speaking about one specific proposal for Renewing the Spirit of National Service that ICP has developed—Summer of Service—I would like to provide some context for the value of scaling up the next generation of service programs:

1. First, there should be a continuum of service that begins in elementary school and continues through one’s work life and retirement. The commitment to serve one’s community is learned, not inherited. To be an effective citizen, one needs to practice being a citizen. It is not something one can learn entirely from a textbook. So people from all backgrounds, young and old, need opportunities to practice being active and engaged citizens.

2. Second, service is strategy to meet critical national needs. Service gets things done. Every policymaker should ask how service can address unmet needs and build it into a public policy strategy. Service isn’t nice, it’s necessary. We all benefit from full-time, stipended service, which improves education, the environment, public safety and the delivery of human services.

3. Third, service is a strategy for engaging young people in productive, skill-building activities. It prevents risky behavior, re-engages at-risk youth, and provides a way for young people to make healthy decisions and see their potential to create positive change for their community and country.

*Summer of Service*

Within this context, Summer of Service is an important initiative to fill a gap in the continuum of service initiatives, because it will provide opportunities for middle school students—a population for whom very few service opportunities exist. ICP’s report on the potential for a “Summer of Service” highlights the need to focus on creating service opportunities for middle school students for the following reasons:

1. Children in middle school are too young to work and too old for many of the programs available to younger children. Summer school is often only for those who are failing, and working families may be hard-pressed to pay for adult supervision of their young teenagers. AmeriCorps members must be 18 and only limited funding is available for community-based organizations to run programs for younger youth. There is a need to fill this gap in order to prevent risky behavior at this critical transition to adolescence.

2. Research indicates that the transition between middle school and high school is when we see a big rise in the drop-out rate. Summer of Service programs would keep children making that transition connected and help deter dropping out. Connecting Summer of Service programs with service-learning programs in schools during the academic year through Learn and Serve America would help create an academic and service bridge for these young people.

3. Despite the pivotal nature of the early teen years, youth-focused investments (other than education), tend to emphasize problems, not the potential of these young people. We spend money to tell teens to stay away from drugs, to keep offenders off the streets, and to discourage teen pregnancy. Yet research—and common sense—tells us that giving young people something to say ‘yes’ to is an essential part of teaching them to say ‘no.’

A universally available Summer of Service program would fill this policy gap by helping communities create positive alternatives for young teens. Developing a national system to enable all young people to participate in service as a ‘rite of passage’ would be possible, even in a tight economy, if the system were built on the existing infrastructure of service programs. Summer of Service would be an opportunity for intergenerational service programs that would bring together seniors, young teens, older students in high schools and universities, and AmeriCorps members to work together. Senior Corps has committed to working with AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America to make this happen.

As you proceed, I urge you to consider incorporating Summer of Service into your bill. The DeLauro and Dodd Summer of Service bills will be introduced shortly, and I urge you to contact Representative DeLauro and Senator Dodd to sign on as co-sponsors.

An example of the kind of program that the Summer of Service Bill would support is the Breakthrough Collaborative, which currently operates in 15 states, including

New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Texas, and the District of Columbia. The program engages over 700 talented high school and college students in teaching more than 2,200 middle school students with limited educational opportunities every summer. The program consists of summer sessions in which the middle school students take classes in core academic subjects and work on community service projects to help them develop an awareness of the larger communities in which they live.

*Expanding service opportunities*

In looking to the next generation of service, there is a gap between young people's desire to change their communities through service and the opportunities for civic participation available to them. We need to strengthen and expand the existing framework for national service and programs such as Learn and Serve America, Senior Corps and AmeriCorps, as well as incorporate new, scaleable ideas.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita showed the commitment of young people to their country, as many rose to the challenge and responded in large numbers to assist with rebuilding the Gulf Coast. In addition to responding to natural disasters, there are many other critical needs they can address, such as:

- helping to upgrade our infrastructure,
- reducing the backlog of projects that need to be carried out on our public lands—a backlog that now runs into the billions of dollars,
- providing energy conservation services to millions of low-income households eligible for the Weatherization Assistance Program,
- addressing the education needs of the half million high school students who annually drop out before graduation, and
- helping to deliver health care to the approximately 56 million Americans who need better access to services.

To address these national needs, several key program ideas have been developed by ICP, by members of the Voices for National Service Coalition and by other organizations that I have described in detail in my written testimony. I will only mention a few here:

1. Pathways to Teaching is a proposal ICP has developed that would tap into the 500,000 current and past AmeriCorps members as a potential pool of future teachers willing to serve in the country's most challenged schools.

2. Clean Energy Corps is a proposal for a program that would respond to the new national emergency of global warming. It would give young people and under-employed people the opportunity to serve their country by working in the field of renewable energy and energy conservation.

3. Other specific proposals include creating an Education Corps; a Health Corps; an AmeriCorps\*CCC program; a New Citizens Corps for recent immigrants; and a Disaster Readiness, Response and Recovery Corps, among others. These programs would all help fill in the continuum of service experiences and engage a diverse and inclusive population of Americans in gaining a sense of belonging to an effort greater than themselves, while at the same time, contributing to the improvement of their communities by "getting things done" and renewing the spirit of service in America.

*Close*

All of these ideas are possible, and the committee would have many partners willing to help develop them in greater detail. We can, and should, provide every young American with the opportunity to serve his or her community and country. Our government has asked little of most of its citizens. We should all be asked to contribute to our country's security and the health of its communities. Even very young people can make important contributions and are eager to do so if provided with the opportunity. The committee is right to take action to renew the spirit of national and community service. As John Gardner said, "Freedom and responsibility, liberty and duty, that's the deal."

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT PURIFICO, PRESIDENT,  
DESTINATION IMAGINATION**

Mr. PURIFICO. Madam Chairwoman, Congressman Davis and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. As a child advocate and lifelong educator and volunteer, it is my hope that this hearing will help renew the

spirit of service, encourage the desire of volunteers to continue their efforts. I am here today on behalf of Destination Imagination Inc., an organization that for nearly a quarter of a century has utilized volunteers to help children grow and make a difference in their communities. I can unequivocally say that, without the efforts of our tens of thousands of volunteers, we would have been incapable of growing into the worldwide organization that we are today.

Over time our organization has operated in all 50 States and over 40 countries providing children with the opportunity to learn how to work together as a team and to solve real life problems. Currently, we do not have affiliates in all 50 States because, as we all know, volunteers come and go. Indeed, this is one of the reasons I am eager to testify before you today.

Plainly, the recruitment and retention of volunteers is the essential ingredient to life-term success for organizations such as Destination Imagination.

My written testimony provides further details about our numerous programs. However, today I would like to quickly highlight two of our programs.

The flag ship Destination Imagination program is the oldest and largest of the programs. DI is a community-based school-friendly program where young people take what they know and what they do well and learn to apply it to solve challenges.

The program fosters creative and critical thinking, develops teamwork, collaboration and leadership skills while fostering self-respect for oneself and for team members. Teams of up to seven members participate in the DI challenges in schools and community groups or at churches and synagogues. Over the course of 2 to 3 months they will work together in the development of a given challenge. Each challenge might be in areas such as technical, mechanical, improvisational, science, theater arts, structural or architectural design. The teams are assisted by a team manager volunteer who assists them as a Socratic facilitator. Upon completion of the solution to the challenge, the teams may participate in a local tournament or will progress on to a regional and affiliate level tournament. We are currently in the final stages of affiliate tournaments throughout the world.

As a matter of fact, this past weekend saw Congressman Mike Ross, whose wife serves as a DI volunteer, at the 25th annual affiliate tournament in the great State of Arkansas.

The year-long program culminates in an annual global finals event which gathers nearly 18,000 participants at one event, half of whom are all volunteers.

We are very proud of our accomplishment with this program.

However, our appreciation of the importance of service helped create a recent addition to our community of programs.

In Project Outreach, which was developed by a group of alumni of the flagship program, middle and high school students work to solve real life problems in their communities. Since its inception in 1995, Project Outreach teams have developed and solved numerous community challenges, including implementing school clean-up drives and environmental education programs, raising funds for a shelter for battered women, assisting in the building of low-income housing.

While I would like to expand on our programs more in this setting, it is more important to testify that, central to the success of Destination Imagination Inc. is a corps of thousands of dedicated volunteers, who on a yearly basis enable this organization to exist.

In any given year, our organization will use approximately 30,000 volunteers. Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and interests, including educators, family members, youth in the community, corporate volunteers, members of community civic organizations and from professional fraternities associated with colleges and universities. The volunteers serve as affiliate and regional directors, team managers and appraisers, challenge developers, international challenge masters and affiliate training directors. They are the heart and soul of the organization. And each year, they return time and time again to offer their services.

In fact, we find that many of our volunteers continue to serve the organization long after their children are no longer part of the program.

However, as in the case with many volunteer-dependent organizations, we never have a shortage of kids who want to participate in our programs. Our challenge is to continue to attract adult volunteers.

I commend the subcommittee for the work it will do this year in support of the national service programs and encourage the private and nonprofit sectors to keep an eye on the goal of preparing the next generation for the many challenges that lay ahead.

And finally, we need to always remember the words of a meaningful age-old saying that states: A thousand years from now, it will make little difference what kind of house we lived in, what kind of car we drove or how much money we had in the bank. What will be important is that we individually and collectively have made a difference in the life of but one child.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify and look forward to working with the subcommittee to finding new ways to continue and renew the spirit of service in our country. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Purifico follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Robert T. Purifico, President and Executive Director, Destination ImagiNation, Inc.**

Madam Chairwoman, Congressman Platts, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to talk about the importance of national and community service. As a child advocate and someone who served as a volunteer for many years, it is my hope that my testimony will help renew the spirit of service and encourage the desire of volunteers to continue their efforts towards enriching the lives of children, particularly in the quest to learn and master the skills associated with creativity and problem solving. Most importantly, I hope this hearing will help encourage new volunteers to develop a passion for community service.

I am here today on behalf of Destination ImagiNation, Inc, an organization that for nearly a quarter of a century has utilized volunteers throughout the world to help children grow and truly make a difference in their communities. I can unequivocally say that without the efforts of our tens of thousands of volunteers, we would have been incapable of growing into the world's leading non-profit corporation providing a community of creative problem solving programs for youth and adults of all ages.

Destination ImagiNation, Inc, which is headquartered in Congressman Rob Andrews' district in Glassboro, New Jersey, is the product of a twenty-five year path that has dedicated itself to helping all those who participate in its programs understand the importance of teamwork, creativity and problem solving as part of a life-

long “learning process.” The result is that each year, thousands of participants from age 4 to adult throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and even South Africa become excitedly involved in the power of creativity and problem solving in an effort to ultimately help make our world a better place in which to live.

Destination ImagiNation, Inc. is a Community of several different programs all of which focus on the creative problem solving process. Over the past quarter century, our programs have been conducted by volunteer Affiliates, in schools, community organizations, churches and synagogues in all fifty states and in over forty countries.

The Flagship Destination ImagiNation program is the oldest and largest of the Programs. “DI”(r), as it is fondly regarded throughout the world, is a community-based, school-friendly program where young people take what they know and what they do well and learn to apply it to solve Challenges. DI is not so much a program but rather a process of learning HOW to be creative so that its participants will develop life-long problem-solving skills that carry over into everyday life. The goals of the program are intended to:

- foster creative and critical thinking
- learn and apply Creative Problem Solving methods and tools
- promote the recognition, use and development of many and varied strengths and talents
- develop teamwork, collaboration, and leadership skills while developing self respect for oneself and the team members with whom they work
- nurture research and inquiry skills, involving both creative exploration and attention to detail
- encourage competence in, enthusiasm for, and commitment to real-life problem solving.

Our primary goal is for participants to learn these skills while solving the Challenge selected by the team. Teams of up to seven members work together for two to three months in the development of a given DI Challenge in areas such as; Technical/Mechanical, Improvisation, Science, Theater Arts, and Structural/Architectural Design.

The teams are aided by a Team Manager volunteer, who assists them as a Socratic facilitator. Upon completion of the solution to the Challenge, the teams may participate in a local tournament or will progress on to regional and state tournaments. We are currently in the final stages of our Affiliate Tournaments throughout the world. As a matter of fact, this past weekend I had the pleasure of seeing Congressman Mike Ross at the 25th Annual Affiliate Tournament in Arkansas. This coming Saturday, I will attend the Maryland 25th anniversary Tournament in Congressman Sarbanes’ district.

During the course of the program year, depending upon the size and level of participation within the fifty-six international Affiliates, over three hundred local, regional and state-wide Affiliate Tournaments will occur culminating in an annual Global Finals event which gathers nearly eighteen thousand participants (half of those volunteers) to the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Over the history of the organization, the Flagship program has touched millions of children in five continents, all of whom recognize the contributions of the volunteers who enabled them to take their respective journey into the world of creative problem solving.

This recognition and appreciation of the importance of service helped create a recent addition to the Destination ImagiNation Inc. Community of Programs. Project Outreach(r) was developed by a group of Alumni of the Flagship program to utilize the creative and critical thinking skills they had learned in the Flagship program and apply them to real life situations. Simply, Project Outreach became a creative learning experience with a service outcome that combined the energy of youth, the educational value of creative problem solving and the motivation of peer support and recognition into a service learning program. Middle and high school students participate in this program and are facilitated by volunteers who serve as Team Advisors, Tournament Managers, or Tournament Volunteers. Since its inception in 1995, Project Outreach teams have developed and solved numerous community challenges such as:

- Collecting thousands of items of clothing for the homeless
- Implementing school clean-up drives and environmental education programs
- Presenting programs instructing children about the dangers of speaking to strangers
- Developing a nature walk
- Building a handicapped—accessible playground
- Collecting truckloads of paper for recycling
- Raising funds for a shelter for battered women
- Designing exercise to build self-esteem

- Assisting in the building of low-income housing

As we continue a challenging journey into the future, the ability to utilize the skills associated with problem solving in a community setting will be paramount to a successful and meaningful future. Adult volunteers interested in providing a foundation for that success to occur are an important ingredient in helping the youth of our country and the world understand that there is optimism for the future if they in fact are an active part of the process.

Of particular interest to this Committee is our technology-based program called Tech Effects(r) which combines basic technology education and teamwork with creative problem solving. The Tech Effects program links directly to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M) education standards and presents S.T.E.M. to participants in a fun and challenging format in a six to eight week program built around a "Tech Focus"—a specific area of technology. As teams of five to seven kids explore the "Tech Focus" they ultimately build a device that applies that specific type of technology in solving a task in the form of a challenge solution. The solution is subsequently presented in a classroom setting or entered into a competitive format in an after school program, summer program or Tech Rally sponsored by Destination ImagiNation Inc. Affiliates or other groups such as the Boys and Girls Clubs. Tech Effects offers kids the opportunity to develop teamwork, collaboration and leadership skills while encouraging a competence in, enthusiasm for and a commitment to real-life problem solving through the use of technology-based activities that again find their way into the world of creativity and problem solving.

From our Rising Stars!(r) program that works with four to seven year olds, to our D1cor program for adults, the Destination ImagiNation Inc. Community of Programs continues the mission of the organization in helping develop the problem solving skills needed to be successful. A more thorough description of each of our Programs follows this testimony.

Generic to the success of Destination ImagiNation Inc. is a core of thousands of dedicated volunteers who, on a yearly basis, enable the organization to exist. As a former volunteer of eighteen years, I understand that volunteers are the core to our accomplishments.

In any given year, our organization will use approximately thirty thousand volunteers. Throughout the history of the organization, it has been blessed with concerned adults who genuinely care about the future of our youth and their ultimate ability to problem solve in a challenging and demanding future. Our volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests including educators, family members of participants, youth in the community, corporate volunteers, members of community civic organizations such as Rotary, Lions, and Optimist Clubs, and from professional fraternities associated with colleges and universities. Simply put, they are moms, dads, aunts, uncles, grandmas, grandpas, corporate leaders, the spouse of a member of Congress, the Alumni of the organization, and anyone else who understands the importance of instilling the ability to problem solve in the youth of today in an effort to secure our tomorrow.

Our volunteers are our Affiliate and Regional Directors, our Team Managers and Appraisers, our Challenge D1velopers, our International Challenge Masters, and our Affiliate Training Directors. In essence, they are the heart and soul of the organization and each year they return time and time again to offer their services. In fact, we find that many of our volunteers continue to serve the organization long after their children are no longer a part of the program.

As an organization that prides itself and its existence on volunteers, we seek on a yearly basis to expose awareness of the organization to potentially new volunteers. We do this by conducting awareness sessions for community public service organizations, by explaining to our adult D1cor corporate consulting participants the programming that we provide to children in hopes of getting them involved, and by disseminating promotional literature to all support groups and organizations interested in working with kids.

Interestingly, one of our best sources of volunteers is attendance at annual Tournaments. Interested spectators get to see first hand what kids are doing and even have the opportunity to speak with them about the process associated their creative problem solving abilities. We have been successful in attracting the interest of local media in our Tournaments and as the word successfully spreads, we obtain additional volunteers.

Finally, we rely on our corporate sponsors who generously not only support the organization with financial gifts, but also offer the awareness of the organization to their employees who subsequently find interest in supporting what we do with children. We have been grateful for the generous support of many corporate entities and foundations over the years. Our current list of supporters includes the National Dairy Council, 3M, Velcro USA, Inc, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers,

the Staples Foundation and Sci Fi, which is part of NBC Universal. A complete list of current and former supporters follows this testimony.

As is the case with many volunteer dependent organizations, we never have a shortage of kids who want to participate in our programs. Our challenge has become one revolving around ways to continue to attract adult volunteers. Although we continually utilize the efforts detailed above to attract volunteers to our organization, we most readily admit that it is a continual challenge to secure them.

As Destination ImagiNation, Inc. moves forward into its next quarter century, we need to continue our effort towards finding new volunteers to perpetuate the vision and mission of the organization. We need to continue to attract volunteers through the outreach in local communities.

If innovation is truly a valued notion in our society, then corporate America must continue to support the types of programs offered by organizations such as Destination ImagiNation, Inc. It is only through this kind of partnership that we will develop the next generation of problem solvers who will in fact know and understand HOW to innovate. Corporate America should continue to embrace and financially support through volunteerism programs that develop the skills needed for the future.

We need to also continue our work in the private sector to increase the understanding of ways in which corporate employees can serve the non-profit sector as Trustees so they can lend their knowledge, expertise and generosity in the continuation of the mission and vision of the non-profit.

Additionally, non-profit organizations need to do a better job coordinating with each other to explore ways in which we can combine our talents and resources to better serve the youth of America.

The future of this country and the world of which it is a part, is an optimistic one that demands its youth understand how to generate ideas, focus on them and then ultimately solve the complex challenges they will face.

And finally, we need to always remember the words of a meaningful age-old saying that states: "a thousand years from now it will make little difference what kind of house we lived in, what kind of car we drove or how much money we had in the bank. What will be important is that we individually and collectively have made a difference in the life of but one child." It is through that effort that we will secure the future of our country and of our world one child at a time.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify and look forward to working with the Subcommittee in finding new and continuing ways to renew the spirit of service in our country.

*Former and Current Corporate and Foundations Supporters of Destination ImagiNation*

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Chairwoman McCARTHY. Thank you.  
Ms. Brown.

#### STATEMENT OF MARCIA BROWN

Ms. BROWN. Good morning Chairwoman McCarthy and members of the committee. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am here today as a proud veteran of AmeriCorps National Service and a current member of AmeriCorps Alums, the national network that aims to connect, support and mobilize alums to strengthen our communities and our Nation. I am honored to be here as one of the 400,000 alums of AmeriCorps National Service.

Ultimately, I hope to convey that we have an enormous unrealized opportunity to leverage the significant investment we are making in service leaders through AmeriCorps by following it with a relatively modest investment in the lifetime of service that AmeriCorps inspires.

I would like to tell you a little bit about my story and how I came to be an AmeriCorps member. At the time, I was working in sales, and everybody knows that sales people are driven by money. And I, too, was driven by that money.

But I had a client that needed a rocket scientist, and I found one. So she came in, and she went to the assignment. Two weeks later, she comes in, and she says, Ms. Brown, I am not going to be able to work there any more.

And I was like, oh, sweetie, what happened?

She says, Well, I am just not happy.

Silence on my end. I am thinking to myself, what in the world does happy have to do it with it? You are making a truckload of money. So what? Anyway, on the way home, I am thinking to myself, I am so upset. Why am I so upset? I couldn't figure out if I was upset at her or upset at myself. But ultimately, I realized that I was upset with me because it had never occurred to me about being happy or fulfilled in a job. I only had ever worked for money.

About the same time, I began to read about the children's test scores in Atlanta and that they were failing in reading and math and thought it would be a good time to do something besides shake my head every day and say, mm-mm-mm, the kids can't read. So I went on the Web site and ended up on Hands on Atlanta's Web site and found the AmeriCorps program.

And that is how I began my term of service.

I was lucky enough to be—2004/2005 I served. I am sorry.

I was the volunteer coordinator for Centennial Elementary School. And what that basically meant was that I was in charge of bringing resources, whether they be corporate, colleges, business, churches, into the community into that school community specifically to tutor children and mentor programs.

But I also was able to work with the Salvation Homeless Shelter, and I was able to, because of my recruiting background, 13 people partnered with the Sheraton Hotel, and they got jobs. So one day

I was there, and this guy comes up to me. And he says, Ms. Brown, you don't remember me; do you?

I said, no, sweetie, what is your name?

He said, I am Mario. I used to live in the shelter. But I don't live there any more.

And it was like, you know, the music played, and it was such a moment for me because at that moment I realized that I had the power to change lives.

So through my AmeriCorps experience and now that I am serving—I continue to serve. I am a program manager with Hands on Atlanta, and now I manage a team of 27 members and seven of the lowest performing schools in Atlanta. And we are able to bring in mentor programs from Georgia Tech, Emory, Morehouse and Spelman, just to name a few.

I am a board member of the Vine City neighborhood association. And I also sit on the steering committee for the Annie E. Casey Foundation For Student Success. And I say these things to you because I am but one. But there are, many, many alums out there just like me.

But what we need is we need a way to network. We need to be able to tap into everyone's skill sets, bring that thing together on a national level.

We recently had the opportunity to be in New Orleans for Katrina. And Ms. Peggy said, without a doubt, without the alums, that her house never would have been built.

My time is running out, so I got to tell you specifically. I want to suggest that the committee include in the legislation funding for AmeriCorps Alumni Reserve Corps, which would create a national database of alums and other skilled individuals who are prepared, trained and willing to be deployed to respond to national crises, those disasters, and educational.

This reserve force would leverage the investment our Nation has already made in AmeriCorps by tapping the talents of those who have served, giving these individuals the chance to continue their civic commitment. This hearing happens on the eve of an important milestone for AmeriCorps, the enrollment of the 500,000th member coming next month. In the next decade, sooner rather than later I hope, when we are celebrating the millionth AmeriCorps member milestone, I envision a network of alums that is continuing to lead the strengthening of communities through service that leverages the skills, experience and talents of rich and diverse individuals that make up the network to build a stronger and more vibrant country with a small but intentional focus of resources. And with the will and spirit of AmeriCorps alums to serve, we can make that vision a reality. I would like to thank you today for the opportunity to testify.

[The statement of Ms. Brown follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Marcia Brown, AmeriCorps Alums and Hands On Atlanta**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am here today as a proud veteran of AmeriCorps National Service and a current member of AmeriCorps Alums—the national network that aims to connect, support and mobilize alums to strengthen our communities and our nation. I am honored to be here as one of the 400,000 alums of AmeriCorps National Service.

I am here in part to report on the promising news of the growing AmeriCorps Alums network across the nation. I was in New Orleans just last month to take part in the third annual national leadership conference of AmeriCorps Alums where over a hundred leaders from the alumni network—each a brilliant example of a lifetime of service—came together to share strategies and resources on the development of alumni mobilizing for continued service on a local level. Each is leading the effort to keep alums engaged in their local communities. I met Michael Agyin from Los Angeles, an African American man who is hearing impaired. He is providing leadership for our entire network on inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities. I met Lisa Tatum from Dallas, who is leading that community's chapter and has self-organized and self-financed alums to travel to the gulf to serve the victims of Hurricane Katrina. And I met Traymone Deadwyler, who is sharing his skills as a professional with the Red Cross, training other Alums on how to respond to disasters.

At that conference I also had the profound opportunity to take part in a recovery service project with 250 alumni and current AmeriCorps members serving in the Gulf—lead by AmeriCorps Alums. Months after most of the nation's attention and volunteer energy has faded from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, AmeriCorps alumni as well as current members—most notably the NCCC—remain in New Orleans providing the direct service and, importantly, the leadership necessary for others to contribute to the massive effort to rebuild those communities.

Secondly, I hope to share with you a vision for what could be possible if we are successful in transcending our current challenges in engaging alumni. That vision is actually within reach: as I will try to describe in my statement today, alumni are taking leadership by self-organizing to continue to serve. A modest but intentional focus of resources to support the systems for this action would promise tremendous return. We ought to leverage the significant investment we are making in service leaders through AmeriCorps by following it with a relatively modest investment in the lifetimes of service that AmeriCorps inspires.

Specifically, I want to suggest that the Committee include in the legislation funding for an AmeriCorps Alumni Reserve Corps which would create a national database of Alums and other skilled individuals who are ready and willing to be deployed to respond to national crises—both those that are sudden, like a hurricane or terrorist attack, and those that are longstanding and insidious, like our nation's challenge to end the education achievement attack or provide health care to low-income families. This reserve force would leverage the investment our nation has already made in AmeriCorps by tapping the talents of those who have served, giving these individuals the chance to continue their civic commitment.

#### *Background*

Since the launch of AmeriCorps in 1994, some 400,000 Americans like me have completed a term of service and make up the body of AmeriCorps Alums. This is a powerful and growing potential resource for communities that has gone largely uncultivated and unsupported over the past decade.

In fact, a recent longitudinal study released by the Corporation for National and Community Service states that AmeriCorps alumni are more likely to volunteer in their communities, pursue public sector careers like teaching, and demonstrate more active civic engagement on a variety of levels than the average American. Without much intentional effort to support it, alums are taking the initiative to continue to help our own communities.

As a result of my service experience in AmeriCorps, I have sought out my own opportunities for continued service and civic leadership. I sit on the board of the Vine City neighborhood association; I am a member of the Annie E Casey Foundation Steering Committee on Student Success; and I remain actively involved in the school where I served my AmeriCorps year, helping coordinate corporate sponsorship for academic and after-school programs. I consider myself lucky to have had the access to the resources to learn how to navigate my communities' networks and find ways to get engaged.

AmeriCorps Alums are our communities' emerging citizen leaders—we are applying our skills in the workforce, taking advantage of college opportunities made possible by the Educational Award, and some are continuing to serve our communities in a variety of ways.

From my own program at Hands On Atlanta, I have teammates who are now in law school, training to be doctors, serving as teachers, and working in nonprofits like me. Regardless of our career or life path, we all share a common bond that is born out of the experience of service. It is an experience that has shifted our consciousness about community responsibility and embedded an ethic of service.

However this commitment sometimes lies dormant. The skills and experience of alums remains a relatively untapped resource when compared to the vast numbers of alums who are out there. The spirit that brought these alums to service must be better leveraged and their skills and experience put back to work. Alums answered the call to service once before, and they will again with a coherent framework that applies their leadership and teamwork skills, and reinvigorates the spirit of service that inspired them to make the choice to serve not so long ago.

AmeriCorps Alums, first established in 1997, made steps in coordinating a national network to support the continued leadership and service of its members. The organization intends to leverage the skills and experience of alums while supporting their ongoing leadership development. One piece of this strategy has been the creation of a vibrant online community that enables AmeriCorps alums to organize themselves and convene for continued service. The website [www.lifetimeofservice.org](http://www.lifetimeofservice.org) has over 100 chapter homepages that local alumni leaders have created to communicate to other alumni about further opportunities to engage in service. With modest additional resources, AmeriCorps Alums could turn this virtual and community-based resource into a powerful national tool to respond to our nation's greatest needs.

#### *What AmeriCorps Alums Need*

The post-service period for many is one of transition and change. They may be entering into a new career—focusing all of their energies on being successful in that new job; they may be going on to college where they need to attend to their studies to ensure success; they may be starting families; they may be doing several of these things at once. Despite these other competing life priorities, many still are eager to find ways to remain connected to national service—their programs and teammates—and the communities where they served.

In my experience both as an Alum seeking to remain involved in my community and as a leader seeking to support current AmeriCorps members preparing for their lifetimes of service, I have identified a few things that are critical to success in that regard:

**Continuity from the AmeriCorps Service Term to a Lifetime of Service:** A powerful alumni network begins with a connection to that network as members. Many programs and state commissions do a tremendous job with limited or no resources in making this connection for their members. States and programs that commit to this type of activity are yielding the return on that investment.

For example, in Georgia, our state service commission convenes all the members in the state to participate in two annual gatherings—a service kick-off and a graduation event to mark the closing of the service year. I routinely invite Hands On Atlanta's AmeriCorps alumni to our community-wide service events like MLK Day. These are just a few of the touch points that we can make available to alums to stay involved, but we shouldn't end there—more sophisticated resources for ongoing and sustainable service are also needed.

**Systems and Infrastructure for Engagement:** After a year of service, there is not always an obvious place to go to connect to other alumni in the local community. Only recently has the infrastructure for AmeriCorps Alums chapters begun to be cultivated. The good news for alumni of our program is that our host organization, Hands On Atlanta, provides exactly that type of community resource—a training ground for leaders to gain skills and knowledge about community issues; projects to take volunteer action to address community issues; and a gathering place to connect to others who are leading service activities in the community. This type of “service center” should be available in every community and AmeriCorps Alums should be an integral part.

**A Network to Continue their Development:** Once again, we are missing an opportunity if the investment that is made in AmeriCorps members is not leveraged beyond the AmeriCorps term. We should make a relatively modest investment in the ongoing maintenance and “continuing education for citizenship” that starts but shouldn't end with the training that is provided in AmeriCorps. This can happen virtually and in the real world—leveraging the growing capabilities of the internet and the vast networks of expertise that exist within the national service community.

**Ideas:** If we are successful in building a network for national service alumni, we will find an invaluable and perpetually growing resource bank of human and leadership capital poised to answer the call to be mobilized for continued service in communities. Below are some specific ideas for how to make this happen that can capitalize on the specialized skills, talents, and experience of AmeriCorps Alums.

**An Alumni Reserve Corps:** Alumni of AmeriCorps represent a growing and capable resource that can meet the workload surge following a disaster and provide valuable and experienced service in targeted issues of local and national concern, such

as failing schools, environmental projects, or special needs for out-of-school time. During their terms of service, their sponsoring organizations make significant investments in the training and preparedness of AmeriCorps members—specialized training such as American Red Cross Mass Care and Shelter Operations, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), or reading tutor training that meets state teaching standards.

Alumni could be more easily engaged to respond to crises and other priority national needs if a database, training and deployment systems were developed and if funding were available for living and travel expenses for Alumni volunteers ready to be called back into service.

**Infrastructure for Service:** One of the key challenges facing the successful mobilization of alums in continued service after their program year is the local convening and activation infrastructure for alums to plug in to for ongoing service opportunities, leadership development, and a venue for connecting to other alumni leaders in their community. Service centers that provide project opportunities and ongoing training and leadership development are important community resources for alumni.

**Alums On Campus:** Many alums are taking advantage of college opportunity as a result of their education award benefit from AmeriCorps. At the same time many colleges and universities are offering a matching scholarship or other benefits. Indeed, AmeriCorps alumni are precisely the profile of candidate admissions officers are on the lookout for.

In exchange for a match of the Ed Award from their schools or another form of award augmentation, we can incent Alums to take on leadership of service activities on their college campuses. A special Ed Award supplement can be tied to continued community service activity, recruitment and promotion of national service on campus, and other community leadership roles that alums might take on.

**Civic Entrepreneur Fellowship:** AmeriCorps alumni represent some of the most innovative problem solvers this nation has to offer. Hundreds of social entrepreneurs have served through AmeriCorps and gone on to apply their skills to starting innovative new programs. The Civic Entrepreneur Fellowship would support this trend by providing 2-year fellowships and leadership training for alumni who want to develop new solutions to pressing community problems.

Through these efforts, AmeriCorps Alumni can continue to be the vanguard for change in communities, large and small, across the nation.

AmeriCorps Alumni, individuals who have dedicated one year of service or more, can continue to be the vanguard for change in communities, large and small, across the nation.

This hearing happens on the eve of an important milestone for AmeriCorps—the enrollment of the 500,000th member, coming next month. In the next decade—sooner rather than later, I hope—when we are celebrating the one millionth AmeriCorps member milestone, I envision a network of alums that is continuing to lead the strengthening of communities through service and that leverages the skills, experience, and talents of the rich and diverse individuals that make up the network to build a stronger and more vibrant country. With a small but intentional focus of resources and the will and spirit of AmeriCorps Alums to serve, we can make that vision a reality.

#### APPENDIX: THE NATIONAL SERVICE RESERVE CORPS

Alumni of AmeriCorps and other national service programs represent a growing and capable resource that can meet the workload surge following a disaster and provide valuable and experienced service in targeted issues of local and national concern, such as failing schools, environmental projects, or special needs for out-of-school time. Alumni could be more easily engaged to respond to crises and other priority national needs if a database, training and deployment systems were developed and if funding were available for living and travel expenses for Alumni volunteers ready to be called back into service.

A Reserve Corps model could deploy AmeriCorps Alums in 30-day assignments. These assignments could be renewable twice for up to a 90-day total deployment. In support of these deployments a national training program to maintain readiness and any relevant certification of training. Alums could be available to deploy in disaster response or during needs for short-term service surges, for example support for summer service learning activities for at-risk youth or discrete environmental conservation projects.

We propose creating legislation that support:

- Authorizing establishment of a National Service Reserve Corps Partnership to establish necessary policies, rules, and procedures comprised of representatives from

the Corporation for National and Community Service, state commissions, alumni groups, national service programs and advised by governmental and non-governmental disaster management and relief organizations. The Partnership will develop and communicate to alumni and national service programs the eligibility requirements, program expectations, enrollment procedures and other necessary Reserve Corps program information;

- Authorizing the development of systems needed to make Reserve Corps resources available to emergency managers at the local, state, and national level and other organizations approved for placement of reserve corps members including systems for training, typing, deployment and coordination;

- Establishing a program and policies for maintaining Reserve Corps members' training, certifications, and skills, and correspondent readiness and eligibility for deployment;

- Establishing a searchable database accessible to emergency managers at the local, state, and national levels and other organizations approved for placement of Reserve Corps members that contains regularly updated information necessary for effective deployment of Reserve Corps resources including: information describing availability, special skills, and certifications of each member and member contact information;

- Establishing a website, electronic mail, and other communications systems needed to ensure safe and efficient deployment of Reserve Corps resources;

- Developing agreements with disaster relief organizations, participating national service programs, and other organizations with whom Reserve Corps members would affiliate;

- Developing necessary training curriculum and delivery mechanisms including "just-in-time" training as appropriate; and

- Developing content and standards needed for inclusion of the Reserve Corps in national, state, and local disaster management plans.

National Service Reserve Corps will be authorized at such sums as may be necessary.

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Chairwoman McCARTHY. Mr. Gudonis.

**STATEMENT OF PAUL R. GUDONIS, PRESIDENT, FOR INSPIRATION AND RECOGNITION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (FIRST)**

Mr. GUDONIS. Good morning and thank you, Chairwoman McCarthy, Congressman Davis and members of the subcommittee, I am Paul Gudonis president of FIRST, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. We are a non-profit whose 60,000 volunteers share a vision with FIRST founder and inventor Dean Kamen. We want to inspire young people to dream of becoming science and technology heroes. Many of America's future challenges, from finding new sources of energy to responding to threats to our national security are going to require new technologies. So FIRST works to encourage students to become tomorrow's innovators.

Big challenge for FIRST is that we face a major cultural problem. The media lionizes sports stars and Hollywood idols, and too many young people believe that their best opportunity in life is bouncing a ball or singing their way to fame. A culture gets what it celebrates. And unfortunately, we are not celebrating the hard work and innovation that created this Nation's standard of living and leading competitive economy.

So FIRST addresses this by engaging over 130,000 students a year in robotics competitions, a sport of the mind which emphasizes creativity, team work and gracious professionalism. Each year teams of students work side by side with engineers and scientists from over 2,000 organizations, large corporations such as GM, GE, IBM, Xerox and Boeing; technology companies, such as Google and

Microsoft; leading universities, such as MIT and Georgia Tech; and government agencies, including NASA.

The idea behind FIRST is simple. Kids love the competition in spectacle sports, and they look up to adult role models. The role models in FIRST have day jobs designing aircraft at Lockheed Martin or developing wireless technology at Motorola. As for spectacle, I just returned from last week's first championship, the Super Bowl of Smarts, attended by 20,000 people in the Georgia Dome, while millions more saw it on TV and across the Internet.

Well, does FIRST succeed? Well, based on the research conducted by Brandeis University, FIRST participants are 50 percent more likely to attend college, three times as likely to major in engineering and nine times as likely to have an internship with a company during college.

For women and minorities, results are equally dramatic. Young women go on to studies in science and engineering at three times the average, and minority members of FIRST teams enter these teams at 150 percent the rate of nonparticipants. A team composed primarily of minorities in Phoenix attend a school where only 10 percent of students continue their education beyond high school. All six graduating FIRST team members this past year earned full scholarships at Arizona State University. Overall, more than \$8 million in scholarships are available to more than 75 colleges and universities for FIRST team members.

While FIRST has a staff of only 70, it is the 60,000 volunteers who power this life-changing experience for FIRST participants. We also have a small and highly effective group of volunteers through the Corporation For National and Community Service and the AmeriCorps and VISTA program. They multiply their impact by each recruiting as many as 100 other volunteers into FIRST. And we also collaborate with other volunteer organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts and 100 Black Men to bring FIRST programs to their members.

Engineering professionals are encouraged by the companies who also sponsor the teams to serve as mentors. For some, it is a way to strengthen our Nation's competitiveness. For others, it is a way to build a pipeline of tomorrow's workforce. And others want to give back and provide opportunities to under-served communities. These volunteers are truly the rock stars of FIRST.

These mentors pass on their passion for service and technology and, as importantly, values that include community service and volunteerism. FIRST students are twice as likely to volunteer. And they believe they should be leaders in their communities. FIRST high school teams mentor younger students. They help rebuild homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and they develop science projects to share the fun with younger students. The spirit is encouraged by FIRST's highest award, the Chairman's Award, which is not for building the fastest robot. Rather, it is for community service and outreach.

Thanks to the energy and the commitment of these wonderful volunteers, we have grown dramatically. Yet only 5 percent of U.S. high schools have a FIRST team. Governor Jennifer Granholm of Michigan has said, Just as every high school has a football team,

it should have a FIRST Robotics team. That is how we will change the culture of our country.

So, going forward, we plan to step up the pace and start more FIRST teams in more schools. We will continue to overcome the two largest obstacles in expanding the program, which is finding sponsors for additional teams and recruiting teachers to take on the extra load of coaching a FIRST team. We will seek extra pay similar to what teachers who coach football or lead the school play receive to the teachers who spend their nights and weekends inspiring the next generation of innovators and technology entrepreneurs that have made this Nation the leader that it is.

Well, thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the volunteers at FIRST, the important work they are doing and the results they are achieving.

[The statement of Mr. Gudonis follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Paul R. Gudonis, President, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST)**

Good morning and thank you, Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts, and members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Paul Gudonis, and I am President of FIRST, a nonprofit organization whose 60,000 volunteers share a common vision: To inspire young people to dream of becoming science and technology heroes. FIRST, which stands for, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, was founded 18 years ago by inventor Dean Kamen to address the cultural problem we face to excite our young people about the world of science, engineering and technology.

Many of America's future challenges—finding new sources of energy, fighting disease, cleaning the environment, and responding to threats to our national security—will require new technologies as well as political will and community engagement. FIRST works to interest today's students in becoming tomorrow's innovators.

FIRST accomplishes this objective by engaging over 130,000 students annually in robotics competitions—a sport of the mind, which emphasizes innovation, teamwork, co-opetition (competing while collaborating) and Gracious Professionalism. We offer a set of programs for students in grades K-12: Junior FIRST LEGO League for the youngest students; FIRST LEGO League for middle school children; and the FIRST Robotics Competition and junior varsity FIRST Vex Challenge for high school students. Starting in the fall of each school year, teams of 10 students in grade school sign up for the FIRST LEGO League while high school teams of 25 students join the FIRST Robotics Competition. They work side-by-side with professional engineers and scientists from over 2000 companies and institutions: large corporations such as GM, GE, IBM, Xerox, and Boeing; technology companies such as Google, Cisco, and Microsoft; leading universities including MIT and Georgia Tech; and government agencies such as NASA.

The idea behind FIRST is a simple one: Young people love the competition and spectacle of sport, and they look up to adult role models. The role models in

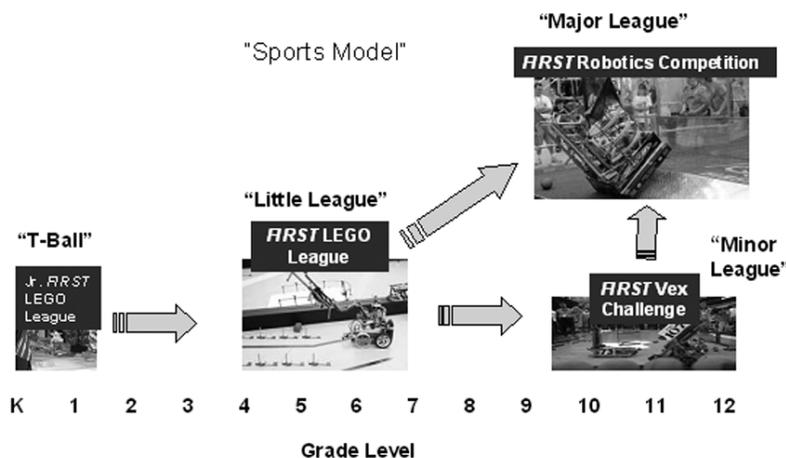
FIRST are our nation's best and brightest, whose day jobs may be designing the newest aircraft at Lockheed-Martin or developing the latest wireless technology at Motorola. By volunteering on a FIRST team, they mentor these students and open up new opportunities for them in science and engineering. And as for spectacle, I just returned from the FIRST Championship, the Super Bowl of Smarts, which was attended by 20,000 people in the Georgia Dome, site of the 1996 Summer Olympics and that other Super Bowl a few years ago. Millions watched the coverage on CNN and on the Internet.

The challenge for FIRST is not just in forming new teams and attracting even more volunteers. We also face a major cultural problem here in the United States. The media lionize sports stars and Hollywood idols and inundate our youth with messages that lead them to believe that their best opportunity in life is to spend hours bouncing a ball to earn a shoe contract, or to sing their way to fame. A culture gets what it celebrates, and unfortunately, we are not celebrating the hard work and ingenuity that created this nation's high standard of living and leading, competitive economy. We take for granted that we have electricity, clean water, transportation systems, computers and telecommunications, and a longer lifespan due to our advances in medical technology.

Addressing this problem is what convinced Dean Kamen to start FIRST. As a National Medal of Technology recipient, holder of over 450 patents, and inventor of numerous medical devices, he launched FIRST in 1989 with the support of a group of concerned CEO's from some of America's major companies. FIRST is established as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Manchester, New Hampshire. The board of directors is composed of individuals who have experience as senior executives of major corporations involved in medical technology, information systems, automobile manufacturing, aerospace, education, and other fields. The Chairman of the Board is John Abele, founder and retired chairman of Boston Scientific. The organization has an operating budget of \$22 million annually and fulltime staff of 70 people, twenty of whom are deployed in field locations across the United States.

#### *First Programs*

At the heart of FIRST is an interlinked continuum of programs providing life-changing experiences for young people ages six to eighteen. FIRST programs provide ever increasing challenges in the field of science, technology and engineering with the goal of engaging children in their early school years and then advancing them to the flagship program the "FIRST Robotics Competition" for high school students. The FIRST continuum is depicted below:



FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is designed for students 9-14, and Junior FIRST LEGO League is for kids 6-9. Each September, FLL teams of up to 10 children take on a new Challenge based on current real-world problems facing scientists and engineers globally. FLL has two key parts. In the robot game, teams design, build, test and program autonomous robots that must perform a series of tasks or missions. In the research project, teams conduct research and create technological or engineering solutions and must present their findings to a panel of judges at tournaments. Teams participate in one-day events during a three-month tournament season.

The FIRST Vex Challenge (FVC) is designed for small teams of high school aged students who work with one or two dedicated mentors to design, build, and test a robot using an off-the-shelf kit. Teams, which typically meet once or twice a week, maintain an engineering notebook through the season to document the engineering process and their journey from initial concept to final design. In challenges that change each year, robots operate autonomously and under operator control.

In the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC), teams of high school students have a thorough experience of the process of innovation and engineering during an extremely intense 6-week "design/build" season starting in early January. Teams receive a common "Kit of Parts" in a large crate. There are no instructions, just a set of rules for the year's game. Students work with mentors—engineers, technologists, business people, and innovators—to create a team and robot that competes and collaborates in alliances during three-day events in March. During the season, many teams work daily for 2-4 hours or more. According to many, "FRC is a 'real-life' engineering experience. We never have enough time, information, or money, but we do have a hard deadline and we know there are 1,300 other teams working just as hard as we are."

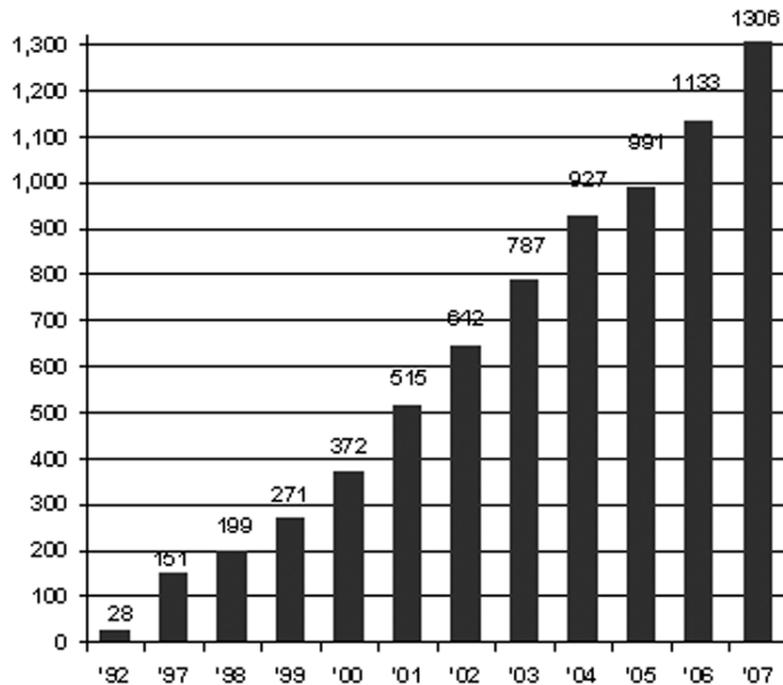
Youth can participate in FIRST LEGO League, FIRST Vex Challenge and FIRST Robotics Competition from kindergarten through high school. Adults, including many FIRST alumni, become team mentors or volunteers of many types. The experience of FIRST participants is further enhanced by FIRST's unique, powerful collaboration with industry, academia, government, and non-profits.

While our mission is to inspire young people through these after-school activities, there is a lot of learning going on. Students use mathematics in designing their robots (algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus); they apply principles of physics and chemistry and learn to experiment while building these machines. To encourage sound engineering practices, teams are required to document their work in an Engineering Notebook. To compete for awards, they must develop skills in language arts, writing their award submissions and honing their public speaking abilities. Operating a FIRST team is much like running a small business enterprise, and teams have to develop a marketing and public relations plan, raise the necessary funds (salesmanship), and keep track of their finances. They also develop skills in computer programming by creating a website for their teams and using professional Computer Aided Design and 3D animation software as part of their design process.

#### *Program Growth*

The FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) has grown from 28 teams of high school students in its inaugural year of 1992 to 1306 in the current season. In the upcoming year, we will be holding a record 41 regional tournaments in the United States, Canada, Brazil, and Israel as qualifying events for the FIRST Championship that will be held in Atlanta, Georgia in April 2008.

NUMBER OF FRC TEAMS



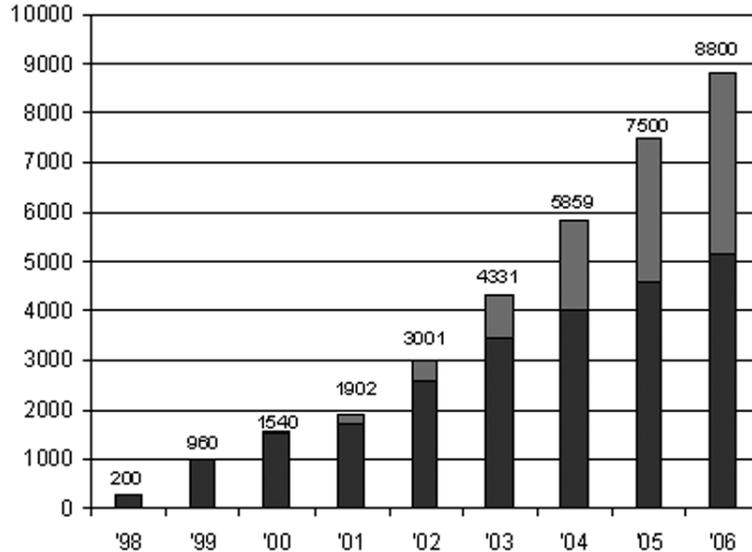
## LOCATIONS OF FRC REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS



Each year, a panel of volunteers from industry and academia design a new research challenge for the FIRST LEGO League teams. In 2003, the game was Mission Mars, based upon NASA's Spirit and Opportunity robotic exploration of the planet Mars. In 2004, the teams researched human disabilities in the No Limits challenge. In 2005, the children studied the seas in Ocean Odyssey, and in this past season, they learned about nanotechnology as they studied bucky balls, carbon nanotubes, and other molecular structures. For 2007, they will be tackling the world of alternative energy in Power Puzzle, a very relevant topic to our nation's environment and energy security.

The FIRST LEGO League has grown to over 8800 teams in the United States and 45 countries through the relationship FIRST has with the LEGO Company, which manufactures the Mindstorms robotics kits used in this program.

## FIRST LEGO LEAGUE TEAM GROWTH

*Volunteers*

FIRST is possible because of the commitment of 60,000 volunteers who serve as team mentors, technical advisors, judges, referees, fundraisers, tournament organizers, and in various support capacities. They are professional engineers and scientists, teachers, parents, university students and faculty, FIRST alumni, and retirees. They share a common vision of what adult role models can do to inspire the young people who participate on a FIRST team. Like pro sports figures or Hollywood icons, these volunteers are the real "rock stars of FIRST."

Over 2000 corporate sponsors encourage their technical employees to volunteer for FIRST. These companies recognize that they have a role to play in ensuring the nation's competitive leadership by developing the next generation of technical talent. These employers are facing a shortage of trained scientists and engineers, especially as "baby boomers" approach their retirement age. As Mr. Al Canton, Executive Director of General Motors' Proving Grounds and Test Operations put it, "We believe getting kids involved in science and technology is good for everyone, and it certainly feeds our pipeline for future engineers."

Mr. Galen Ho, President-Information and Electronic Warfare Systems for BAE Systems North America concurs. He states, "FIRST is a wise investment for BAE Systems because it energizes tomorrow's scientists, engineers, and leaders. That's good for the individual student, the community, and the nation." Likewise, Mr. Steve Sanghi, CEO of Microchip Technology in Arizona explained that "FIRST isn't just about building robots, it's about developing life skills. The kids learn skills in relationships, teamwork, finance, fundraising, budgeting, and project management. The partnership between academia, the community, and industry \* \* \* will build our future employees and future citizens."

The FIRST staff recruits, trains, and supports the many volunteers who donate their time and talents to FIRST teams. FIRST provides handbooks and coaches' guides, conducts online and in-person workshops, and publishes information via our website to enable these volunteers to serve effectively. FIRST also screens volunteers for certain positions and collaborates with schools and other organizations to make sure that volunteers are appropriate for these activities.

The Corporation for National and Community Service administers funding for approximately 20 volunteers who serve as FIRST Senior Mentors, reaching out in their communities to recruit additional teams and connect them with volunteer mentors from local corporations. In addition, a dozen AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers

assist in their geographic areas to support new FIRST teams, thus engaging more schools and communities in the FIRST experience. These resources are highly effective for FIRST by multiplying their impact—a single volunteer in this role attracts 100 mentors and supporters to the program.

Other volunteer organizations also combine their resources with FIRST to reach more students and communities. Through local partnerships with Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, IEEE, Girls Inc., and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) among others, FIRST is able to establish and mentor additional teams and bring the excitement of participating in FIRST to more young people.

While the number of FIRST volunteers grows each year with the growth of the various programs and expansion into new cities and states, we have a very high retention rate among these dedicated individuals. Some FIRST Robotics Competition teams have been in existence in their communities for over a dozen years, and while the students have graduated and moved on, the engineering mentors often remain committed to these teams, constantly inspiring a new cohort of students that are coming through the program.

#### *Sponsorship*

Conducting these programs requires funding in addition to the significant volunteer manpower involved in making FIRST happen. Teams are encouraged to raise the money to pay for robotics kits, extra parts, uniforms, and travel by asking major corporations, local businesses, and individuals to support their participation in FIRST. Corporate sponsors are the largest source of funding for teams, often sponsoring multiple teams through their business units across the country. For example, GM provides funding and 275 engineering mentors for 55 FRC teams, supports over 100 FIRST LEGO League teams, and sponsors several regional tournaments. GE supports twenty-five FRC teams and other FIRST programs, and Motorola sponsors FRC and FLL teams, in conjunction with their Girl Scouts of the USA initiative.

In addition to providing cash contributions, many companies donate materials for the robotics kits. We are able to keep down the cost of participating in FIRST thanks to the generous contribution of motors, gears, pneumatics, batteries, and many other components by industry suppliers. Software maker Autodesk provides professional-grade design software to all of the FRC teams. Federal Express has donated free shipping of the kits of parts and finished robots for many years; this past season, that amounted to over 100 tons of free shipping.

Universities also sponsor FIRST events. In some cases, they will contribute to the cost of a regional tournament, provide students and facilities for one of the robotics teams, or subsidize the cost of the basketball arena to be used as a competition venue.

#### *Scholarships*

These universities also support FIRST's goal of increasing student interest in science and engineering careers by enabling their college education. Over 75 colleges and universities offer 430 scholarships totaling \$8 million in value to FIRST graduates. These scholarships are available to FIRST team members who are accepted by the college or university and meet any other financial aid criteria established by the institution. From what the universities tell us, they love FIRST program veterans because they make excellent science and engineering students because of their hands-on experiences and adoption of FIRST values.

#### *Impact*

Does FIRST accomplish its mission? Based on research conducted by Brandeis University, FIRST participants are 50% more likely to attend college, twice as likely go on to major in science or engineering, and three times as likely as a comparison group to major specifically in engineering. Upon entering college, they are nine times as likely to have an internship with a company and they expect to pursue a career in engineering at four times the rate of a comparison group of matched peers. For women and minorities, the results are equally dramatic: Young women go on to studies in science and engineering at three times the average, and minority members of FIRST teams enter these fields at 150% the rate of non-participants. Executive Summaries of these studies are included in Appendices A and B.

There are many individual stories as well. A young man in Brooklyn wrote to me about how, before joining a FIRST team, he belonged to another type of team, one you grow up with on the streets, but can't talk about. He wasn't very interested in school, smoked two bags of marijuana a day, and had been arrested for robbery, possession, and selling. Since he joined the FIRST Robotics team, mentored by some wonderful technologists, he has stayed in school, has a "legal salary job" for the FIRST time in his life, and is looking forward to college.

A team composed primarily of minorities in Phoenix attends a school where only 10 percent of the students continue their education beyond high school. All six graduating FIRST team members this past year earned full scholarships to Arizona State University. Being on a FIRST team has opened up a new world of opportunity for them—and created a group of motivated, smart individuals who will be pursuing careers in science and technology.

The mentors pass on their passion for science and technology, and, as importantly, a set of values that includes community service. FIRST students are twice as likely to become volunteers and believe that they should be leaders in their communities. During the off season, FIRST high schools teams mentor younger students with their LEGO robotics kits; they are helping to rebuild homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and they are using their talents to develop science programs to share the fun with other young people.

FIRST's highest award is the Chairman's Award, and it is not for the fastest or highest-scoring robot. Rather, the judges select the team that best reaches out to their community, recruiting and mentoring rookie teams and performing service projects that exhibit the values of FIRST.

#### *Increasing the Impact of FIRST*

Thanks to the energy and commitment of these wonderful volunteers, we've grown dramatically, yet only 5% of US high schools have a FIRST team. Some states have even fewer; New Hampshire leads the nation with 38% of its high schools boasting a FIRST team. In Rhode Island, every high school now has an opportunity to compete in the FIRST Vex Challenge program. As Governor Jennifer Granholm of Michigan stated during her visit to the Detroit FIRST Robotics Competition regional tournament last year, "Just as every high school has a football team, it should have a FIRST team." That's how we'll change the culture of our country.

We have the volunteers, and I can find more among our nation's technology companies and the large corps of retired engineers who want to share their skills with young people. The biggest obstacles to starting more FIRST teams and engaging more students is finding additional sponsors and convincing teachers to take on the extra load of coaching a FIRST Robotics team. Teachers are already overworked and underpaid, and we know from experience that offering them a stipend would be a big boost to the program for a variety of reasons.

Teachers who coach football and basketball teams or organize the school play often receive extra pay for their time. We should do the same for the teachers who will spend their nights and weekends inspiring the next generation of innovators, medical researchers, and technology entrepreneurs that have made this nation the leader that it is.

FIRST will work with states and local communities to address this issue, and continue to seek out additional sponsors and supporters of FIRST teams. Our board of directors has reaffirmed its commitment to the vision of FIRST by endorsing a plan of continued growth in program participation—engaging more students, schools, communities, sponsors, and volunteers. Given the challenges and opportunities facing our nation today, we recognize the importance of "stepping up the pace" and inspiring more young people to gain the education and skills necessary for an increasingly technological economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the volunteers of FIRST, the important work they are doing, the impact they are having, and the results they are achieving.

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More Than Robots: An Evaluation of the First Robotics Competition

### **Participant and Institutional Impacts**

*Center for Youth and Communities, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University*

#### *Executive Summary*

In 2002, FIRST contracted with Brandeis University to conduct an evaluation of the FIRST Robotics Competition. The goal of the evaluation was to begin to address three basic questions:

- What is the impact of the FIRST Robotics Competition on program participants in terms of academic and career trajectories?
- What can we learn about the implementation of FIRST in schools, both in terms of better understanding program impact and identifying "best practices"?
- What kinds of impact has participation in FIRST had on participating schools and partnering organizations?

An additional goal of the study was to focus the evaluation on schools in urban communities and/or serving high proportions of low income and minority students.

One of the goals of FIRST has been to expand the involvement of low income and minority youth in FRC, and the evaluation was seen as an opportunity to explore the impacts of the program on those groups in particular.

To address these questions, Brandeis conducted a two-part study:

- To assess impacts on program participants, Brandeis conducted a retrospective survey of FIRST participants who graduated from the program between 1999 and 2003. The study focused on students from teams from two metropolitan areas—New York City and the Detroit/Pontiac metropolitan area—to ensure the inclusion of schools serving low income, urban or minority students.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 300 FIRST alumni were contacted for the study. 173 (57%) responded and were included in the analysis. In order to provide a comparison with youth who had not been in FIRST, the study also included a comparison of FRC survey results with comparable data from an existing national dataset: the Beginning Postsecondary Student (BPS) Survey, a national sample of college-going students available through the U.S. Department of Education.

- To provide feedback on program implementation and institutional impacts, the evaluation also conducted site visits and interviews with team representatives in 10 participating high schools in the two communities. Those visits were designed to gather information on the implementation of the program and impacts on participating schools and program sponsors.

The purpose of this report is to convey the final results from both the retrospective survey and site visits.

#### *Key Findings*

Key findings from the study include the following:

##### *Program Participants*

- The FIRST alumni in the study represent a diverse group, including substantial numbers of students who are minorities, women, and from families with a limited educational background. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were non-white (African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and multi-racial); 41% were female; and 37% came from families where neither parent had attended college (including community college).

- At the same time, participants were relatively successful students in high school. The mean high school Grade Point Average for alumni in the sample was 3.5 (B+) and 84% had a B average or above. Average SAT and ACT scores and participation in high school math and science classes among respondents were both above the national averages. What is not clear (and cannot be answered in this study) is whether this strong performance in high school was the result of involvement in FRC, or whether FRC attracted strong students, or both.

##### *Team Members' Assessments of FIRST*

Based on the survey responses, FIRST provided a positive experience that gave participants an opportunity to be involved in a challenging team activity, build relationships, learn new skills, and gain a new understanding of and interest in science and technology.

- Almost all participants felt FIRST had provided them with the kinds of challenging experiences and positive relationships considered essential for positive youth development.

- Eighty-nine percent indicated they had “real responsibilities;” 76% felt they had a chance to play a leadership role; and 74% reported that students made the important decisions. Ninety-six percent reported having fun.

- Ninety-five percent reported getting to know an adult very well, and 91% felt they learned a lot from the adults on the team. Ninety-one percent felt they “really belonged” on the team.

- Most participants also reported a positive impact on their attitudes towards teamwork, interest in science and technology, and how they saw themselves. Participants reported:

- An increased understanding of the value of teamwork (95%) and the role of “gracious professionalism” (83%).

- An increased understanding of the role of science and technology in everyday life (89%), increased interest in science and technology generally (86%), and increased interest in science and technology careers (69%).

<sup>1</sup>The initial program design called for inclusion of schools from a third area: the San Jose/San Francisco metropolitan area. Because of difficulties in accessing participant data from those teams, only one California team ended up in the study.

- Increased self-confidence (89%) and an increased motivation to do well in school (70%).
- FIRST also helped increase participants' interest in serving others: 65% of respondents reported that, as a result of FIRST, they wanted to help younger students learn about math and science; 52% reported that they had become more active in their community.
- The large majority of participants also reported that FIRST had helped them gain communications, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills, and how to apply academic skills in real-world settings.
- More than 90% reported learning important communications skills, such as how to listen and respond to other people's suggestions (94%) and how to talk with people to get information (94%). Seventy-three percent reported learning how to make a presentation in front of people they did not know.
- Students also learned teamwork and interpersonal skills. Ninety-two percent reported learning how to get along with other students, co-workers, teachers and supervisors; 90% learned to work within the rules of a new organization or team; 88% reported learning new ways of thinking and acting from others; and 73% learned ways to stop or decrease conflicts between people.
- Students learned problem-solving and time management skills: how to solve unexpected problems (93%); how to manage their time under pressure (90%); how to weigh issues and options before making decisions (94%); and how to gather and analyze information (88%).
- Students also learned to apply traditional academic skills in real-world setting: 68% reported learning how to use computers to retrieve and analyze data, and 67% reported learning about using practical math skills such as using graphs and tables or estimating costs.
- Overall satisfaction with the program was high. Ninety-five percent of the alumni rated their experience as "good" or "excellent" (27% and 68% respectively). Forty-six percent of respondents indicated that FIRST had been "much more influential" than their other activities during high school.
- Finally, response to open-ended questions on the survey tended to reinforce these findings: participants cited the team experience as particularly influential and cited team skills, new relationships, an increased focus on science and engineering, and increased self-confidence and motivation, among others, as long-term impacts from the program.

#### *Education, Career and Developmental Outcomes*

While participant assessments provide one measure of FIRST's impact, the ultimate measures of FIRST's effectiveness are the degree to which alumni go on to have productive educational experiences, careers, and lives in their communities. The analysis of the alumni survey data indicate that FIRST alumni are making a successful transition to college, and are much more likely to pursue their interests in science and technology and become involved in their communities than is the case for college-going students generally or for the matched group of comparison students.

- The large majority of FIRST alumni graduated high school and went to college at a higher rate than high school graduates nationally.
- Among those responding to the survey, 99% reported graduating high school and 89% went on to college. At the time of survey, 79% were still in college; most of the others were employed. (Only 5.5% of the alumni reported that they were unemployed.) These figures compare favorably to the national average where (based on U.S. Census data) 65% of recent high school graduates went to college.
- The high levels of college-going applied across the board to both men and women and across racial and ethnic groups in FIRST. Seventy-seven percent of female FRC alumni were in college, 68% of African-American alumni, and 78% of Hispanic alumni—all above the national averages for those groups.
- Once in college, a substantial proportion of FIRST alumni took courses and participated in jobs and internships related to science, math and technology.
- Eighty-seven percent took at least one math course and 78% took at least one science course in college. Perhaps more striking, 51% took at least one engineering course.
- Nearly 60% of FIRST alumni had at least one science or technology-related work experience (internship, apprenticeship, part-time or summer job). Thirteen percent received grants or scholarships related to science or engineering; and 66% reported receiving any kind of grant or scholarship.
- High proportions of women and minorities also participated in math/science/technology courses and internships. Forty percent of female alumni took engineering classes, 59% had a science/technology internship or job. Forty-six percent of African-

American alumni and 53% of Hispanic alumni took engineering courses. Sixty-four percent of African-American alumni (but only 29% of Hispanic alumni) had science/technology internships or jobs.

- FIRST alumni were also substantially more likely to major in Engineering than the average college student nationally.

- Of those FIRST alumni reporting a college major, 41% reported they had selected Engineering. Based on national data from the U.S. Department of Education's Beginning Postsecondary Student study, FIRST alumni were nearly seven times as likely to become Engineering majors as the average college student nationally (41% for FRC alumni vs. a national average of 6%). FIRST alumni were also twice as likely to enroll as Computer Science majors (11% vs. 5% nationally).

- Women and minority alumni also majored in Engineering at comparatively high rates. Thirty-three percent of the female FRC alumni, 27% of the African-American alumni, and 47% of the Hispanic alumni reported majoring in Engineering (compared to national averages of 2%, 5% and 6% respectively).

- Finally, FIRST alumni were also substantially more likely to aspire to higher levels of education than the average college student nationally. Seventy-eight percent of FIRST alumni reported expecting to attain a post-graduate degree, either a Master's degree (47%) or another terminal degree such as a Ph.D., MD, or MBA (32%). Only 2 participants in the study (1.4%) reported that they did not expect to attain any kind of degree. Nationally, 60% of students in the Department of Education's BPS study aspired to completing a Masters degree or higher and 4.4% did not expect to receive any degrees.

The positive education and career outcomes for FIRST participants were also evident in an analysis that compared FIRST participants with a matched comparison group of students drawn from the national Beginning Postsecondary Student survey data. The comparison students were matched with FRC alumni in terms of their demographic characteristics and their high school academic backgrounds, including similar levels of high school math and science course-taking. Major findings from that comparison group analysis reinforce the positive outcomes associated with participation in FRC. FIRST alumni were:

- Significantly more likely to attend college on a full-time basis than comparison students (88% vs. 53%);

- Nearly two times as likely to major in a science or engineering field (55% vs. 28%) and more than three times as likely to have majored specifically in engineering (41% vs. 13%);

- Roughly 10 times as likely to have had an apprenticeship, internship, or co-op job in their freshman year (27% vs. 2.7%); and

- Significantly more likely to expect to achieve a postgraduate degree (Master's degree or higher: 77% vs. 69%).

- More than twice as likely to expect to pursue a science or technology career (45% vs. 20%) and nearly four times as likely to expect to pursue a career specifically in engineering (31% vs. 8%).

In each case, these differences were statistically significant. The differences in engineering majors and careers also applied to female and non-white FIRST participants, who were significantly more likely to declare engineering majors or expect to enter an engineering career than students in the comparison group.

FIRST alumni were also significantly more likely to be involved in community service and to express a commitment to several positive goals and values than the members of the matched comparison group.

- FRC alumni were more than twice as likely to perform some type of volunteer service in the past year as were students in the matched comparison group (71% vs. 30%),

- FIRST alumni were also significantly more likely to provide some of the specific types of service that might be associated with FIRST team efforts: tutoring, coaching or mentoring with young people (such as helping another team or a younger team), fundraising, and neighborhood improvement. In each of those specific categories of service, FRC alumni reported levels of volunteer service that were four to ten times as high as those of the comparison students.

Finally, the only outcomes in which the data indicate that FRC students did significantly worse than the comparison students were in receipt of grants and scholarships in their freshman year and across all four years of college. This is a somewhat surprising result given FIRST's active efforts to raise scholarship monies for FRC participants and the fact that 66% of FRC participants reported some form of grant or scholarship in college. However, it suggests that, as of the time these FRC students were going on to college (1999-2003), those efforts had not yet resulted in a relative advantage for FRC participants in grant or scholarship funding when compared to students with similar backgrounds.

In sum, the data from the FRC survey shows FIRST as having a strong, positive impact on participating youth, including women and minorities. Based on the data from this study, FIRST appears to be meeting its goals of providing a positive and engaging developmental experience for young people and is succeeding in its efforts to increase the interest and involvement of participating youth in science and technology.

*Institutional Contexts: Impacts on Schools, Teachers, and Mentors*

- Based on data gathered through site visit interviews and observations, FIRST has also had a positive impact on participating schools and teachers, though that impact was limited in scope.
- Involvement in FIRST has led to creation of new courses and/or integration of robotics instruction into existing classes in 8 of the 10 schools visited. FIRST has also helped teachers to develop or exercise new skills (primarily planning and management skills) and has had a positive effect on school spirit in a number of schools (one team leader attributed an increase in school enrollment to FRC's impact on school reputation).
- At the same time, involvement in FRC has not led to broader changes in teaching or curriculum, or to the establishment of broader partnerships with FRC sponsors. In most cases, this was not seen as a goal for the program.
- Mentors played an important role in almost all of the teams visited, with the specific roles varying widely.
- Most teams reported mentors provided assistance through a combination of topic-based technical workshops for team members and hands-on guidance with individual students. In some cases, mentors also helped students with homework and worked to develop positive relationships with students on the teams. None of the mentors reported receiving any training in preparation for their role, though only two felt that it was needed.
- Some sponsors took additional steps, including working with multiple teams, establishing workshops for teams in a region, allowing multiple teams to use workshop space, and in some cases branching out to start new or work with new teams.
- At least 3 of the 10 teams in the study also had FIRST alumni working as mentors.
- Mentors generally reported positive impacts, including opportunities for career advancement, increased morale and job satisfaction, access to new hires, and a sense of satisfaction and connection to students on the team.
- In general, company-wide impacts on the sponsoring companies were limited. While some firms did include their involvement in FIRST in promotional materials, most did not. Similarly, while individuals within firms recruited interns from among FIRST participants, most recruiting and hiring of FRC participants took place on an ad hoc basis rather than through consistent company policy.
- Site visit interviews also identified a number of barriers and challenges faced by the teams. Some of those challenges include the following:
  - Start-up challenges: learning how to organize and run the team.
  - Meeting space: access to space and equipment to build the robot.
  - Transportation and safety: transporting students to and from team meetings, particularly during competition season when the team might work until late at night.
  - Financial challenges: obtaining and maintaining sources of funding was overwhelmingly reported to be the primary challenge in doing FRC, with travel (to tournaments) as the biggest cost.
  - Burnout: most coaches noted burnout as a danger and suggested strategies that included dividing the workload among several coaches and "over-organizing" to ensure smooth team operations.
  - Working with sponsoring corporations: several teams reported challenges working with sponsoring companies, including limited team control over the budget and pressure on the mentors to win from the company CEO.
  - Recruiting mentors: experiences varied widely, with Michigan teams generally reporting greater corporate support (most had been approached by companies) and those in NYC reporting greater challenges in securing the interest of sponsors and mentors.
  - Recruiting teachers: another ongoing challenge, but an important step for teams to take in order to share the workload. In some cases recruitment was difficult because non-FRC teachers were resentful of the attention received by those already involved in FRC or saw the FRC team as "owned" by a particular teacher.
  - School administrative and district support: support varied, from strong administrative support and access to resources, to more reluctant support. Similarly, district

support ranged from little or none (because of budget cuts) to active support (funding for travel, etc.). One key is making the benefits of participation clear.

- Parent support: most teams indicated they have only low levels of parent volunteer support.

- Several additional challenges were also identified by the mentors who were interviewed as particularly important in working with underserved schools. Those included:

- Turnover of school administrators: high levels of turnover at urban schools required that administrator 'buy-in' be renewed on a regular basis.

- Attendance of team members at meetings: the need of some team members to balance team participation with after-school responsibilities, including work and child care for siblings, made consistent involvement difficult for students on some teams. Transportation to and from meetings also presented a problem for some team members.

- Addressing the needs of students from underserved areas: while positive about their experiences, some mentors did note the additional challenges involved in working with students, i.e., difficult personal lives or limited experiences and social skills.

- Working with school staff: gaining consistent teacher participation, challenges in communicating with teachers, and differences in operating philosophies.

#### *Recommendations*

The principal findings of this study provide strong support for the continued growth and expansion of the FIRST robotics programs, particular into communities serving low income and minority youth. The major recommendations are to continue to document the effectiveness of the program and to build a broader base of evidence for the program's impacts through two mechanisms: a larger-scale longitudinal study that would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of participant impacts, and the development of a participant registration process for FRC that would make it easier to keep in touch with FIRST alumni and to track the longer-term career trajectories of former participants.

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### **First Lego League Evaluation—Initial Survey Results**

Center for Youth and Communities, Brandeis University, April 2004

#### *Survey Sample*

The FLL evaluation distributed survey packets to teams participating in a sample of 8 of the FLL regional tournaments: a total of 394 teams. Team packets included a coach survey, student surveys, and surveys for parents of students. 185 teams (47%) returned packages, providing a total of 162 coach surveys, 919 student surveys, and 699 parent surveys.

#### *FLL Coaches*

FLL coaches tend to be male (69%), white (86%), with a background in science or engineering (67%) and teaching (51%). 59% of the coaches have a child on their team.

#### *FLL Teams*

- FLL teams are predominately located in suburban areas (60% suburban, 21% urban, 18% rural). Approximately 34% of teams report serving low-income students; 11% report teams where half or more of the students are from low-income families.

- Most FLL teams meet as after-school programs (72%). 9% are part of a school class; 9% are neighborhood-based (i.e., not affiliated with a school); 5% are home-school-based.

- Most teams (70%) met twice a week or more, with an average of 4.5 hours of meetings every week.

- 97% of the teams responding to the survey did the FLL research project, which represented approximately 30% of their time spent working as a team.

- 90% of the teams reported attending the state/provincial tournament; 64% participated in a qualifying event.

#### *FLL Participants (Student Survey)*

- 70% of the FLL participants/survey respondents were boys; 30% were girls. 78% were white, 8% Asian/Pacific Islander; 5% Hispanic; 4% African-American.

- The average age of participants was 11 years old. 81% were in 5th-8th grades (16% were younger).

- 65% had a parent involved in the program.

*FLL Student Experience*

The large majority of students reported a positive experience in FLL:

- Over 90% of the students reported that the kids on their team made the important decisions; that they had real responsibilities on their teams; got all the help they needed; felt that adults working with the team paid attention to them; and that they felt that they were an important part of the team and belonged. 98% of the students said they had fun working on their FLL team.

- Students reported learning a mix of knowledge and skills: Over 90% reported learning about the use of science and technology in real world problem-solving; about science and technology careers; that science and technology are important in everyday life; and about the uses of school subjects (like math or science) in solving real world problems.

- Students also reported learning about themselves and their skills: Over 90% reported learning that they had skills that could help others on a project; that every team member can help make a project better; that both boys and girls can be good at computers and robotics; and that helping others solve problems can be fun.

- Students reported learning a variety of teamwork and problem-solving skills. Over 90% reported learning at least “a little” about working with other team members to solve a problem; brainstorming ideas; making decisions about roles on a project; accepting others’ suggestions and ideas; making suggestions to others; identifying steps needed in a project; managing time; using trial and error to test an idea; and identifying ways in which science (like computers and robots) can be used to solve real-world problems.

More than 80% also reported learning how to solve disagreements among team members; how to work well with both boys and girls; how to develop a research question; how to find information to answer a research question; how to use math in solving real-world problems; how to make a presentation using charts and graphs; and how to explain the scientific ideas that the team used in creating their robots.

- Team members were least likely (50%) to report learning how to write a brochure or letter explaining their project and (76%) learning to talk to people they don’t know about something they think is important.

- Overall, 93% of the students rated their experience in FLL as good or excellent (30% good, 63% excellent)

*FLL Parent Assessments*

Parents also reported that they believed FLL had increased their children’s interest in science and technology and increased their social and problem-solving skills.

- More than 80% of the parents surveyed reported that FLL had increased their child’s interest in computers and technology; in how science and technology are used to solve problems in the real world; and in the science related to the Mission from Mars. 64% reported an increased interest in science and technology careers, and 59% reported an increase in interest in their children’s interest in their math or science classes.

- 70% or more reported an increase in their children’s teamwork and problem-solving skills, including their ability to work in a group; their sense of belonging; their ability to think through the steps in solving a problem; their use of trial and error; their confidence in speaking in front of a group; and their sense that they can succeed if they try hard. Slightly smaller numbers of parents (60% or more) also reported an increased ability to compromise or settle disagreements peacefully; take the lead on a group project; and use the library or internet to find information. 63% also reported an increase in self-confidence concerning school and schoolwork.

- FLL parents were less likely to report an increased interest in school or traditional academic skills as a result of FLL, though substantial numbers did report an increase. 59% reported an increased interest in math and science; 45% reported an increased interest in school generally; and 40% reported an increased interest in college. 43% reported an increase in math skills.

- When compared to other after-school programs, roughly half (54%) of the FLL parents reported that FLL had more of an impact in terms of teaching about cooperation and teamwork, and approximately 40% indicated it had more of an impact in terms of motivating their children to excel (43%) and helping their children gain a sense of self-confidence (36%).

- When asked if they would like to increase, decrease or maintain their level of involvement with FLL, 30% reported that they wanted to increase their involvement; 67% reported wanting to continue at the current level; and 3% wanted to decrease their involvement. However, 79% indicated that they were unlikely to stay involved once their child left the program.

*FLL Coaches Perspectives*

FLL Coaches reported gains in student interests and skills similar to those reported by parents and students.

- 90% or more of coaches reported an increase in team members' interest in or awareness of ways in which math and science were used in the real world, and their interest in computers and technology. 80% reported an interest in science and technology careers. 60% or more reported an increased interest in math and science classes and in succeeding in school.

- Most also reported an increase in teamwork and problem-solving skills. Over 90% reported an increase in teamwork skills; leadership skills; a sense of belonging or team identity; problem-solving strategies; and presentation skills. 75% or more also reported gains in planning skills, time management; research skills; and a belief in the importance of helping others. The lowest proportion (49%) reported gains in writing skills.

FLL Coaches also reported an impact on themselves as teachers. Among those with a background as teachers:

- 80% or more reported an increased emphasis on the application of science and technology in real world settings in their teaching; an increase in their own knowledge of science and technology; an increased sense of connection with their students; an increased understanding of what their students could accomplish; and an increased respect for what students' capacity to work as a team independent of an adult. 76% reported an increased use of computers and robotics in their classes; and 67% reported an increased use of student-led projects.

- FLL teachers were much less like to report that FLL had increased school partnerships with area businesses (33%) or build business support for other programs at the school (28%)

- 83% of the teachers involved in FLL reported that the experience had increased their satisfaction in teaching.

Overall, FLL coaches indicated that they enjoyed working in the program:

- 87% of the coaches reported that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their experience coaching an FLL team. Only 1 of the 158 coaches responding to the question indicated that they were 'not satisfied'.

- 83% of the coaches reported that they planned to be an FLL coach again next year. Of those not returning, the most common reason cited was lack of time (about 40% of the non-returned). Other reasons included their child leaving the program, changing schools, lack of administrative support. None of the coaches reported disappointment with the program or problems in raising funds to support the team as a reason for not returning.

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FEDERAL GRANTS RECEIVED BY UNITED STATES FIRST SINCE OCTOBER 1, 2004

Source	Reference #	Federal CFDA #	Amount
National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) .....	60NANB4D1106	11.617	\$1,187,400
National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) .....	60NANB4D1107	11.617	\$494,700
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) .....	NNA05CP86G	n/a	\$1,323,100
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) .....	041PANH001	94.007	\$391,500
Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor; Office of Vocational and Adult Education; passed through from the State of Michigan, Department of Labor and Economic Growth. ....	n/a	17.267	\$350,000
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) .....	NNA05CP86G	n/a	\$1,350,000
National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) .....	70NANB6H6172	11.617	\$1,013,800
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) .....	041PANH001	94.007	\$200,000
VISTA .....	.....	.....	\$20,000
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) .....	NNA06CB50G	n/a	\$1,675,000

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Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I thank you for your testimony. I actually thank everybody for their testimony. You know, it is wonderful to be able to sit here and see the enthusiasm that you all have. And being that we are going to be doing legislation and we have heard some ideas of what you would like us to do, obviously, a stipend of some sort for teachers so they can get involved and take that project on, money for getting the program going, but one of the

main things that I am hearing and what I like to hear from you—because I probably have 10 questions for each one of you, and that means I am not going to get answers probably from half of you—what would be the main thing that you would really want us to see done on legislation that would help each and every one of you?

And I guess the second point of my interest, in the world that we are living in today, the global economy is out there. How do we reach, certainly the children in the middle schools, which is to me the area where we see most kids either making it or breaking it or dropping out, going into gangs, going into possibly some trouble?

How can we change the lives of those children? How can all of your different organizations help us get to that point on service and to have that become a life-long commitment? But more importantly, the one thing that you say, and I say this every time I am in a school or anyone I am talking to, how are we going to change someone's life today and make it better? And I think that is the motto that all of us care about.

And let me just say quickly. I know that you don't see a lot of members here. A lot of them have been called for a meeting at the White House, and when the President calls, you respond and go there. So, please, do not think that it is lack of interest. Everybody on this committee cares passionately about why we are on this committee.

So don't think just because we are not here in numbers, we are certainly will be doing our work.

With that, would anybody care to throw out—

Mr. PURIFICO. You touched a very sensitive area of my life. I spent 25 years in a middle school with middle school kids and 13 years of that as a classroom teacher and 9 years of that as a middle school principal. You are exactly right.

This is an age of, where children need to be actively involved to set a foundation for what they might do for their future. They have come out of elementary school with the basic foundations that they have learned in various courses that they have had. And they begin the quest and a thirst for knowledge that will set a goal for them in the future.

How might we engage them? There are numerous programs that exist, some of which you have heard here today. From a congressional basis, programs that would support active involvement of those kids is extremely important. Hands on learning, ways that they can learn how to problem solve and apply, take the theoretical knowledge and actually put it into practice; that kind of learning, that kind of education, helps them to retain that learning and in their future becomes much more substantive. And they feel good about what they are doing as they move forward in their lives.

Mr. GUDONIS. When Dean Kamen first started FIRST Robotics, we started at the high school level, and that program grew. But then we realized that a young man or woman in high school that might love being on the robotics team and realize there may be opportunities for them in engineering or science they never thought possible, that if they were a senior in high school at that time and they just got involved, they probably haven't taken the courses in algebra, precalculus, physics, chemistry, so we realized we had to move down into those middle school years.

So we teamed up with the Lego Company to form our version of Little League, the FIRST Lego League, that is now our largest program. This year, we had over 8,800 teams, 88,000 students worldwide; most of those in the United States. And that is where teachers, engineering professionals, even the high school students from the FIRST Robotics competition mentor these young teams, and they have to build a robot, to execute missions, but they also have to do a research project which they deliver in the most fantastic ways with skits and energy.

This last year it was about nanotechnology. And they learned about carbon nanotubes and buckyballs and how medicines will be delivered in the future. And this coming year the challenge will be alternative energy. So we try to make it very relevant to the topics of the day, and it becomes a great pipeline. Just like we have in T-ball and Little League and junior varsity, in FIRST Robotics, we now have programs ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade following that same type of sports model. It becomes a pipeline for feeding young people into the FIRST Robotics high school competition. But I agree. It is really at that middle school level that really can change some minds.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Ms. Stroud.

Ms. STROUD. At ICP, we have been working hard on filling in some details about a specific proposal that I mentioned today. And there is information in your packages I hope about the Summer of Service proposal. That is targeted specifically at middle school students.

But in terms of your first question about what the committee can do, what the most important things are, I think certainly one of the most important things is to strengthen the programs that exist. Learn and Serve America, for instance, which has the capacity, already engages many middle school students in service learning activities during the academic year, also provides money to community based organizations to engage students in service learning activities.

That program has been cut significantly in the last couple of years and is, in terms of the President's budget request this year, there is another very significant cut included in that. So one of the things I would urge the committee to do is to restore to the historical funding levels of \$43 million a year the Learn and Serve budget. That reaches now millions of students in the United States. So that is one very specific thing that I think the committee could do.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you. Unfortunately, my time is up, but I also want to say, we have a CD that we will be able to watch—a DVD, I guess it is called nowadays; right?

We will be able to watch it later. And I am looking forward to it.

My colleague, Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, again, for being with us today. It has been very informative. I like the enthusiasm that I see.

I would like to start with Mr. Purifico if I could. You say that we need to do a better job in coordinating volunteer services in your testimony. What are some ideas you have or methods you

think that would work to urge nonprofit organizations to better coordinate and work together?

Mr. PURIFICO. There are a couple things—actually several things that we need to do to continue to encourage folks to volunteer in the various programs that are throughout the United States. I think one of the most important things that we need to do first is recognize them. These are people, as you well know, that dedicate their time and effort in varying capacities to help kids and causes move forward and do the good work of the people.

So any way that you can identify—as we try to do in our organization—and acknowledge them for their work. It can be a simple letter. Within our organization, pins are a very, very big thing. And it is a simple—a simple way of saying thank you.

The other thing that I would suggest as another way to continue to move forward to obtain volunteers and to support them is to literally—as several people sitting on this panel have said—support the programs that are there. They need to know visibly that they are being supported and that their efforts are in fact worthwhile. So funding—as you continually hear—in whatever way is possible. Those of us that are working in the private sector trying to do the good work for those people need the help and the support. The organization that I have the privilege and honor of running on a yearly basis will touch anywhere from 250,000 to 300,000 kids. We do it with those volunteers and a full-time staff of 14 people. It is the volunteers that make this happen. So, if they see that you can support that, we have a better opportunity and a better chance through funding to get more of them involved.

They even go to the extent sometimes when, due to circumstances beyond their control, a school system will no longer, because of lack of funds, be able to support it; the parents will step up. And the parents will actually become supportive in that role. We have numerous parents that are team managers. They look for support. They look for ways of funding. And they look for acknowledgment. Those would be the two critical areas that I would suggest to you.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you. I am going to throw this question open to everyone, and we will see if we can get some quick answers. You think that people who have never volunteered before have a hard time finding places to actually get involved and be a volunteer? Anyone? Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN. People that have, we at Hands on Atlanta, that is because what we do, organize large groups of volunteers for people that have never volunteered. All they have to do is go on to our Web site, and there are tons of volunteer opportunities for them. There is also orientation and training for them. And what I know for sure is that, when you treat them good, they will come back, and they will tell others. We are very successful with lots of colleges in terms of mentoring programs. They bring more. And the program just grows by itself, just because they have such a good time doing what they do.

Mr. DAVIS. Do you think that unique to the area, the Web sites, or do you think that is something that is available across our country?

Ms. BROWN. I think that it could be across the country. And I would like to speak specifically to AmeriCorps Alums, because we are trained in that way, and we can no longer pretend like we don't know these things. We can't plead ignorance because we have spent 10 months of service, and we have committed to a lifetime of service. So when you have people that are trained on that type of philosophy, they are able to bring others in. And that is why we need this network across this Nation, so that we can tap into all those resources. I have members now that are in medical school. They are in law school. Some are working for government in fair housing. Many of them are teachers. And they continue to serve. So there is a lot of talent out there. We just need a way to bring it together, tap into it and then spread it out.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you. That is all I have. Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Ms. Shea-Porter.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

I am sitting here so impressed with all of you and, as a social worker, absolutely thrilled to see the energy and the excitement about your programs. And I want to ask a couple of questions. First of all, Mr. Newman, I, too, went down to Louisiana twice after Katrina, and I know of what you speak. And I thank you for that and for publicizing that. I also want to ask you if you have any ideas to help you build that network that you are so effective of building inside your own TV show.

Mr. NEWMAN. We have had a huge response since our documentary aired. We have had not only people volunteering for us, but I was down in Biloxi again just a couple of months ago, and I know that, after that piece aired, their phones were ringing off the hook. Corporate sponsorship, individual people wanted to come down, and they referred to it as the Guiding Light experience that they wanted to have, which sounds to me like a Disney ride or something like that, but if that is what they are looking for, that is great.

I think, for us, it was just a matter of showing people through a documentary that there are opportunities out there for them to volunteer and that it is something that people can do. I think there are a lot of people out there that they think that they don't have the skills to do some kind of work, the kind of work that we did down in Biloxi and that their time wouldn't be made useful because they don't really know what they are doing. What we found, again, organizations like Hands on, AmeriCorps, organizations like that, is that the need is there, and the training is there as well.

People can be empowered and make a significant difference over the course of their time that they volunteered.

I think it is just a question of educating people.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. So you are not losing people. You are channeling them elsewhere. I was listening when you said 100, 150 people. As somebody who used to have to call up every volunteer to find somebody to drive or do whatever, I thought, I hope we don't lose the rest of them. So you do have a place for them to go to if they can't be accommodated by your program?

Mr. NEWMAN. Absolutely and many of the people who have volunteered for these smaller events that we are doing have also said

to me and to others in our show they are also going to be going down to the gulf coast; they are going to be going down to New Orleans and Biloxi as well as joining us in Richmond, Virginia. It just feeds out.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. It does and thank you for using that position. And for those who think you really do have to know what you are doing. My then 16-year-old went down there, and he put books on library shelves. And if he could do that, I am sure anybody could do that. So some of the tasks are so simple and yet so necessary to rebuild those lives.

Mr. NEWMAN. The last week of June, I will be taking my family down. My 18-year-old son and my 15-year-old daughter and my son's girlfriend. They watched our documentary, and they had a sense, oh, I can do that.

And they want to do that.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. They do.

Mr. NEWMAN. The younger kids we talked about earlier, I really think that they are looking for something to, some way to contribute in a significant way. And they want to do it. It is just a question of giving them the opportunity to do it and showing them that they can do it.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Ties in nicely with what I was going to ask you, Ms. Stroud, because it is a gift to young people to make them count and make them realize how necessary they are to fit in our society. And I actually sat next to a lot of young people who were AmeriCorps, and they were helping down in Katrina also. And they were absolutely wonderful. And I thought a lot of the kids would have been walking around the mall and aimlessly trying to find some kind of meaning for the day; and here they were, and you could not stop them. They worked 15, 16, 17 hours and signed up to do more and more. So it is a gift to them as well as a gift to the community.

So I wanted to ask you, Ms. Stroud, because you were talking about your program, that Summer of Service, and how well I know that age group and the difficulty they can get into if they don't have that sense of inspiration and being really important to our culture.

Exactly how is that program ministered? And I will put a plug in about the money right now, that all of these programs, when they are effectively administered—and most of them are—because the people who are volunteers are the heart and soul in success, pay us back so many times over not just in the money but in the service they deliver. So I have, you know, certainly support for the program, but exactly what are you doing with these kids over the summer to make them feel like they are needed?

Ms. STROUD. Well, there are many. There are many examples of programs that engage middle school-aged students in service. But I think it hasn't been taken to scale in the way that the Dodd, Cochran and DeLauro bills propose to do. They would like to provide enough opportunities to make it universally available to all middle school students transitioning in the summer, transitioning between middle school and high school and to create it as a sense of a rite of passage for young Americans.

It is a tradition that we don't have in the United States so much as we have in other cultures. And this might actually help to create a sense of, this is what you do if you are a middle school student before going on to high school. So the—I agree with you as well that the issue is not the lack of interest in volunteering on the part of students in that age category. My experience is that it is a lack of opportunities. And when they are given the opportunity to serve, they will rise to the occasion. So the bill proposes to create, as I said, a kind of universal access to Summer of Service programs that would be created through a competitive grants program administered by the Corporation for National Service.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Time up.

Mr. Sarbanes, do you have any questions? Just to let you know, we are going to be having a vote coming up soon. We will be able to finish. I was actually hoping we could go for a second round, but apparently that is not going to happen, so, Mr. Sarbanes.

Mr. SARBANES. Thank you, Chairwoman McCarthy, and I just want to thank you for your leadership on these issues. I know that people find their ways to chairmanships of these committees not just based on tenure but based on interest and passion on the issues that are within their jurisdiction. And this is a second hearing already that we have had on the issue of service and volunteerism, and that is a tribute to the passion you bring to it, and it is one that I know we share, so thank you very much for that.

Terrific panel. Inspiring panel. There will come a day when, in hopes of hearing what you have to say, that the room will be so packed that people will be standing in the hallways.

And I know that day will come. And I know it will come because of the energy and enthusiasm that you bring.

I do just want to say, I was able to attend the Chesapeake FIRST competition finals at Annapolis Naval Academy, and so it is go to see you here, Paul, and I know Mildred Porter is here as well, and tremendously exciting. I hadn't been to one of those before, and now I am going to make sure it is always on my calendar so I can go back there and bring my three kids as well. In fact, I got up the next morning but didn't get in gear fast enough and then realized that the actual final competition on Sunday was happening earlier in the day than I thought. I was on my way to Annapolis when I checked the schedule and then had to turn around and come home. So it is a wonderful opportunity for our kids.

The AmeriCorps program, it is amazing that the 500,000th volunteer is about to come into the program and what a testament to what this Nation can do when it puts its mind to it.

All the programs that you have talked about and alluded to are part of trying to bring our country together around these service opportunities. I am very proud that, in Maryland, service learning is part of the requirement for graduation in our high schools. And I think that kind of emphasis is one that can bring across the board. And leadership at the Federal level will obviously help with that because, as one of you said, service is something to be learned. It is not necessarily an aid; it is for some people, and they are the leaders. But to get it spread throughout society, we have to inculcate it in a very focused and organized fashion.

I am also just intrigued by the idea that, these days, when there are so many things that isolate us from one another, particularly our children—kids can spend so much time with electronic games, television, IM-ing and so forth, sequestered in their rooms—volunteering is a way to get them out and working together. And it can match that kind of isolation and allows people to share perspectives.

Here is my question, really, there are two questions, and the first is, this notion of creating an infrastructure to allow volunteerism and service to really to bloom and reach its maximum potential in this country, because you know there are those, you get caught up in a thousand points of light perspective, that says, well, people on their own initiative, they will wake up one day, and they will figure out they need to go volunteer, and they will find their way to the opportunity.

But if the infrastructure is not in place, it is not going to happen, and it is not only that; it is a disservice to volunteers you want to help when the infrastructure is not there. I think we saw that in Katrina. If the infrastructure of the government and other agencies could have been better, could have been more prepared, you would not have had volunteers frustrated by their inability to get in there immediately and help. We have a chance—instead of sort of pointing fingers of acrimony and having those be the images, we want to cause this country to have the images of volunteerism being celebrated.

So, if you could, talk to the infrastructure question, anyone who would like to do that.

Mr. GUDONIS. Well, I am glad you joined the first robotics competition. We run thousands of those types of competitions between qualifying rounds, regional, national, and world championships. So we invest heavily in information systems, in training to basically be able to recruit new volunteers, to train them effectively with on-line seminars, with coaches' manuals, with in-person workshops. We use the Web site extensively, and we have been able to very much tap into the AmeriCorps Vista Volunteers and the Corporation for National and Community Service Volunteers. As I mentioned in my testimony, they are able to leverage themselves 100-fold because then they go out in their communities and then recruit these other volunteers. It is that infrastructure, though, around systems so that we can staff all of these events, so we have got referees; we have got judges; we have got people running the scoring systems. So it is really the systems infrastructure that we have put in place over a number of years which has enabled us to scale up like we have and, you know, conduct thousands of events with 60,000 volunteers effectively.

Mr. PURIFICO. I think an important area is that all of us here have various ways that we attract folks to hopefully come and volunteer for our organizations. Word of mouth, publicity, PR, brochures, materials that we send out, and the volunteers themselves are a huge source of referring the organization to other folks.

But if I can bump it up to about 30,000 feet, if I may, the larger question is in what ways might we, this country, find a place, which is what I heard you say, where folks who want to volunteer can go volunteer, and in that area of "in what ways might we,"

wouldn't it be nice if we had some place listed or even sanctioned, a place of sanctioned volunteer organizations that folks could go look at and see and identify the areas that they would like to give of their time. That would be very, very helpful, and I think a lot of folks look for places to do that.

By the way, if you are not busy this Saturday, the proud State of Maryland's Destination ImagiNation will celebrate its 25th year of existence, and the tournament is there.

Mr. SARBANES. That is good to know, good to know.

Let me ask: Can I have one quick follow-up? I know I am out of time. Quick.

Just as to how we measure volunteerism, is it hours served? Is it the number of people that we see? I mean is there any way to do that in a way that is accurate, that you think reflects—maybe just a couple of people could jump in on that because it is important in terms of evaluating the success of these efforts.

Yes.

Ms. STROUD. It is important to measure a number of things. One is what the impact is on the participants, but we also ought to measure what the impact is on the community and, you know, what is getting done as a result that would not otherwise have been done, and those should be issues that are really vital and important and defined by the community as the community's highest needs, and there is—I do not know if you are familiar, for instance, with the longitudinal study that is being done of AmeriCorps being carried out. It is looking at the impact on the participants, but there is increasingly now a fairly solid research base about impact and more sophisticated tools for assessment.

Mr. SARBANES. Great.

My time is up. Thank you very much.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. And I thank you.

We have been joined by the ranking member, Mr. Platts, and I just want to say something.

I have given everybody a little bit of leeway with the red light. If we had a full committee here, I would be a little stricter, but being that we had a really good dialogue, Mr. Platts.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I apologize for my late arrival. A group of six of us, Republican and Democratic Members, just came back from Iraq and Afghanistan, and we had the opportunity to meet with the President for about an hour, so I apologize, though, in not being here for the hearing.

Again, I thank you for your leadership on this very important issue as we move forward with reauthorization.

While I am going to be very brief because I know we have votes coming up here shortly as well, I do want to thank each of the witnesses for your testimony but especially for your leadership out there in your communities in promoting the volunteer and community spirit of our Nation. I have just one question, and it is something that I do not think exists that I have seen in a coordinated way, and I will make an analogy.

Back home in Pennsylvania, we rely heavily on volunteer fire-fighters. It is the backbone of most communities. In my district, I have one fully paid department, and in the rest of my communities I have over 100 volunteer departments. We are working with them

to promote the need of each of those departments within the community and through my newsletter and through our Web site, and then statewide, there is what is called the Pennsylvania Fire Services Institute, and they do a statewide program, you know, where anywhere in the State you can call a 1-800 number and learn about your local community for volunteer or emergency-related service volunteerism.

In your experience in various locations, have you seen anything of that nature? I do not know if we could do it nationally through PSAs and, you know, through a national campaign effort and then put everyone in touch with local groups, such as your own, in your local communities or at least at the State level. I would be interested in each or any of your feedback on that type of approach. I think people are aware of AmeriCorps. They are aware of SeniorCorps, Learn and Serve but maybe not who to call. They just know these programs are out there.

So, thank you.

Ms. BROWN. Recently, we had a conference in New Orleans, and the Red Cross was there, and disaster relief people across the United States were there, and clearly, if there is nothing in place, it does not work very well because people know that they wanted to come, and the Red Cross kept giving countless examples of people showing up with their suitcases who ended up being in the way rather than helping. So, even though they had a strong desire to help, it really was not a good thing. So then we began to think about ways for disaster, not only to respond but to prepare ahead of time. Could we have blocks that were block by block, you know, senior citizens' making sure that everybody has a survival kit or going block by block? Because do you even know who to call or where to go if there is a disaster? Could we put in programs in neighborhoods where everybody meets or the church, and we know that Ms. Lilly down the street is in a wheelchair, so we have got to go get her first? So those types of things. So we talked about that, but clearly, clearly, we have got to be organized, and all of these entities are going to have to find a way to work together. You know, everybody is so "this is mine over here," and "this is mine over here." it will not work like that. They are going to have to find a way. So we did talk about those things.

So, you know, in your mind, you begin to think on the ground level that you could put these things in place and with the fire departments in your neighborhoods because these are all communities, and if for no other reason, that specific community would know where to go and how to respond. So we think that with the right leadership and the right pieces in place that it could very much happen. It must happen.

Mr. PLATTS. Yes.

Ms. STROUD. It sounds like it is partly a pipeline issue. You have got to get enough people into the pipeline, so having a specially designated AmeriCorps team that would work with local volunteer fire departments, and one of the responsibilities that AmeriCorps members has is to leverage other volunteers. So they could, for instance, help to set up chapters on local college campuses in the communities where you have these volunteer fire departments that could even work with senior high school students in terms of pro-

viding some training and introducing them to the role of the volunteer fire department. So that is the kind of infrastructure issue that I think AmeriCorps responds to really well.

Mr. PLATTS. Yes, sir.

Mr. GUDONIS. Well, we engage 2,000 major companies to provide more technical mentors, engineers, scientists, and many of these companies want to reach out to their existing employees but also to their retiree base, and so we often now establish someone who is head of volunteerism. For example, with GM, one person coordinates 275 engineers who work with students all across the country. I was invited to GE, and they put us on their Intranet, their Web site, so that their 330,000 employees can see volunteer opportunities but also want to reach out to the half million retirees. I think that is a growing population that just wants to share their skills and experience in various endeavors, with young people, with projects like firefighting, and so on. So there is a whole pool of talent there. You cannot play golf every day.

Mr. PLATTS. Yes. I think, as we go to reauthorization, it is looking at how better to empower those individuals who have the ability, the time, and want to give back to be able to connect with the various opportunities that are out there and something that, you know, we can look at through reauthorization.

Again, my apologies, Madam Chair, for a late arrival, and my sincere thanks to each of the witnesses for their work. Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

I want to again thank you for your testimony. It is really appreciated. I think we have got some pretty good ideas. We know what you need, and hopefully we can sit down and work these things out and go forward on it.

As previously ordered, members will have 7 days to submit additional materials for the hearing record.

Without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Altmire follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jason Altmire, a Representative in Congress  
From the State of Pennsylvania**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for holding this important hearing to discuss how we can renew the spirit of national and community service in America.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the witnesses. I appreciate the time you took to be here today and look forward to your testimony.

Unfortunately, in this country community service is frequently not seriously considered when formulating public policy. By not including community service in discussions of how to combat our most serious societal issues, we exclude a tool which can be effective in helping deal with these issues. It is my hope that through the series of hearings that this committee is having on community service that we are able to highlight ways in which this possible.

Today, I am particularly interested to hear from Mr. Gudonis and Mr. Purfico, because the service programs each of them represent deal with an issue of great importance to me, the need to improve STEM education in this country. In the 2005 Skills Gap report 80 % of U.S. manufacturers surveyed reported a shortage of qualified workers and 65 % of these manufacturers specifically cited a shortage of engineers and scientists.

Community service alone can not solve this critical problem, however, it can be used to help. I look forward to hearing from Mr. Gudonis and Mr. Purfico, as well as the other witnesses, about how Congress can assist their successful programs and help foster similar programs.

Thank you again, Madam Chair, for holding this valuable hearing. I yield back the balance of my time.

[Whereupon, at 11:42 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

