

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Service -
Wofford memo

CORPORATION
FOR NATIONAL
SERVICE

Bruce -

CC: ERIC
KAREN T.

+ file: Nat. Service

I want to make sure
you see this right away.
I hope you'll see this
is a very good step
for us and for the
President.

Harris

September 7, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

From: Harris Wofford Harris

Subject: America's Promise

From the time you asked me to take this job, my overriding objective has been to move national service to the center of the national agenda and to establish national service, and especially AmeriCorps, on the same non-partisan ground as the military and the Peace Corps. With your strong backing, we have made great progress, winning increasingly widespread approval and some notable new friends - in Congress, in the non-profit community, and in the corporate sector.

Our effort to reclaim the non-partisan foundation for national service has been powered by two central ideas. First, that national service must not stand apart from the non-profit sector, but rather work in tandem with it and be a resource for national and local non-profit organizations. Second, that the purpose of national service is not just to "get things done," but to get things done that are vital to our future as a country. National service must be seen as - and see itself as - not only an end in itself, but also a key strategy for solving our most pressing problems.

Opportunity

A major new opportunity to advance this strategy has been presented recently. Specifically, based on the success of their partnership with the Corporation and especially AmeriCorps, General Powell and the leadership of America's Promise have approached the Corporation about the possibility of a closer alliance with the Corporation.

As you may know, America's Promise and General Powell have determined that the America's Promise effort is meeting with real success and that it should continue into the future. At the same time, the leadership at America's Promise has signaled that they would welcome a relatively small infusion of appropriated funds to support their basic operation. This marks a distinct departure from their original doctrine, which was to be entirely privately funded. However, the demands of fundraising and persistent questions about competition with other non-profits have caused General Powell and his colleagues to rethink that doctrine. //



Further, a number of people, including high-ranking Members of Congress, have recommended that the best way for America's Promise to receive funding would be through the Corporation for National Service, just as the Points of Light Foundation now does. In discussions I have had with the leadership of America's Promise, including direct discussions with General Powell, the desire to forge a closer relationship with the Corporation and its programs is clear. (I attach for your information several of General Powell's recent public statements of support for AmeriCorps, including especially his comment in his presentation to the Governors at the recent NGA meeting in St. Louis.)

In addition to putting America's Promise on more solid footing, strengthening and formalizing our relationship with America's Promise has great benefits for the Corporation and AmeriCorps. The synergistic impact of the Presidents' Summit you convened in Philadelphia, the America's Promise effort led by General Powell, and the capacity of the national service programs – especially AmeriCorps – has already proved enormously valuable in states and communities across the country.

- In many cases, the impetus provided by the Presidents' Summit and the follow-up campaign has been a crucial entry point for AmeriCorps, and has increased our direct ties to Governors who have turned to their state service and volunteering commissions to organize state efforts to fulfill the Summit promises.
- The "on-the-ground" capacity of national service programs has been one of the most effective tools for delivering on the promises, which has been recognized by the leadership of America's Promise at both the national and local levels.
- Our commitment to and involvement with state and local Summits and follow-up activities has moved AmeriCorps to the center of the community response.
- The collaboration with America's Promise has sharpened AmeriCorps' focus on the needs of children and youth, and in turn that has helped sharpen public understanding of the benefits that AmeriCorps brings.
- AmeriCorps members' ability to deliver on the promises agreed upon in Philadelphia has brought AmeriCorps new prominence and acceptance in one community after another.
- The AmeriCorps Promise Fellows program you announced just over a year ago is already a major success, putting nearly 500 top-flight AmeriCorps members to work in states and communities specifically pursuing one or more of the goals of the Presidents' Summit. (General Powell's comments on the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows is included in the attachment.)

In short, teaming up with America's Promise fits our overall approach of great partnerships to achieve critical objectives. It shows AmeriCorps working in close alliance with a well-regarded national organization, taking a leading role on issues of great concern to people. Based on the record to date, the potential for an expanded partnership is a huge opportunity to showcase the success and significance of AmeriCorps.

The Proposal

AmeriCorps is funded through the VA-HUD appropriation. Your budget for the coming year includes a substantial increase to put AmeriCorps on a path to enrolling 100,000 members per year. As the negotiations move forward, I recommend that we include an additional \$7.5 million for the Corporation for the purpose of supporting America's Promise. As noted above, the Points of Light Foundation receives its appropriated funds through the Corporation. This year, the request for the Points of Light Foundation is \$5.5 million and I recommend that in negotiations with congressional leaders we seek \$7.5 million for the Points of Light Foundation as well to establish parity with America's Promise.

Needless to say this is an unorthodox request and recommendation, and the timing is difficult. However, the circumstances are exceptional and I believe this opportunity offers a quantum leap toward our objectives. With your enthusiastic backing, I am confident that we can obtain this support for America's Promise and that in doing so we will greatly enhance the future health and expansion of the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps.

General Colin Powell, Chairman, America's Promise Recent Statements on AmeriCorps and National Service

**In Response to a Question from New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen on the House
Failure to Fund AmeriCorps
National Governors' Association Meeting, August 9, 1999**

Well, I think the House made a big mistake, and I hope it will be corrected. I have now had two years of experience with AmeriCorps and they are doing a great job, and sometimes they are misunderstood. They are given a stipend for their work, but what they do in terms of leveraging other individuals to volunteer and how they facilitate people being allowed to come into the system and volunteer is really incredible. We have 500 AmeriCorps Promise Fellows working with America's Promise and I met three of them earlier here in St. Louis. So it is a tremendous investment in young people, a tremendous investment in the future, and I am a strong supporter of AmeriCorps. I think they have demonstrated their worth, they have paid their dues and they are worthy of the support I hope they will get from the Congress.

**Op-Ed in the Jackson, MS *Clarion-Ledger*
August 9, 1999**

For some of our young people, preserving our democratic way of life means shouldering a rifle. . . . For a select group of young people called the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, it means endowing those younger than themselves with the character and competence they need to lead successful lives. The AmeriCorps Promise Fellows are the latest idea to emerge from the partnership between the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps) and the crusade for young people, called America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth, I am leading. . . . The AmeriCorps Promise Fellows will serve as full-time leaders who can mobilize volunteer efforts to meet the needs of local youth. Right now, more than 400 are at work in communities all across the country. . . . AmeriCorps Promise Fellows are an investment in young people, for the purpose of helping other young people, that promises to pay unlimited returns to our nation in the century ahead.

**Remarks Made via Videotape to the National Community Service Conference
June 1999**

You know, the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service helped to launch America's Promise, helped to launch me, more than two years ago in Philadelphia at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future. I'll never forget the contribution that your two organizations made to this great crusade that we now call America's Promise. . . . It was the start of a vital and important partnership that has been a great benefit to all of us and to the nation's young people especially, and frankly to the nation as a whole ever since. . . .

America's Promise is proud to be a partner with you, all of us together leading this national crusade to keep these five promises. The Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service are more than just allies. I mean, you are true partners and the best commitment-makers that I have in this over-all effort. All the streams of service of the Corporation for National Service come together: including AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Service-Learning, AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, all of these are critical allies taking this message across the nation. . . . And at the same time, hundreds of AmeriCorps Promise Fellows around the country will be helping to organize local volunteer efforts to keep the five basic promises to our youth. They form a powerful leadership cadre for the America's Promise crusade.

**Remarks Made at City Year's 10th Anniversary Conference
May 28, 1999**

Well, there are new kinds of enemies out there now. Enemy called drugs. Enemy called violence. Enemy called despair. And enemy called a lack of hope. There are so many of our communities -- so many of our young people who wonder if the American Dream is there for them. They are the enemies that those youngsters are facing. And, despair, lack of hope, violence -- And, what City Year is saying -- what AmeriCorps is saying -- what America's Promise is saying -- is that we can beat these enemies -- just as easily as we can beat enemies on the battlefield. And we'll use the same kind of tools in beating these enemies. We'll use the tools of discipline. We'll use the tools of hard work. We'll use the tools of education. We'll use the tools of commitment and courage. But above all, we will use the tool of love of country -- that those of us who have been blessed by this country with the opportunity to be successful in life, or the opportunity to be on the road to success. We will reach back, down, and across to help youngsters who are still wondering if his dream is there for them.

In AmeriCorps*NCCC Television Public Service Announcement

Throughout our history we've always been able to count on our young people to step forward and "pitch in" when we needed help. Today, the young people who serve in AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps are showing us the best of this "American spirit". They tutor our children, aid the victims of disasters, restore our streams and parks, and assist with the care of our elderly. I urge you to support these young Americans....and learn how the NCCC can help you...and your community.