



Americorps Monthly Report

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Organization Name: Boaz and Ruth, Inc.

Program Name:

Name & Title of Reportee: Veronica Kerns, Site Administrator

Reporting Period: May, 2008

Date this report completed: June 9, 2008 at 9:17 AM

Outputs: Briefly describe activities during the reporting period relative to your program's Performance Measures. Clearly state how and/or why the particular activity relates to the performance measure.

Needs and Services: In the month of May, 2008 Boaz & Ruth's clothing store was officially opened for business. It is located in the 10,000 square ft. garage which is currently undergoing restoration. Restoration of the area where the new clothing store is located in the building has been under way since January 2008.

To see the doors open for business is true progress. On opening day the clothing store looked as if it came out of a Martha Stewarts catalog. The interior displays and clothing arrangements are remarkable. It took a lot of man power to get the venue started. In May AC members trained in the area of Sales and Marketing extensively. AC members were exposed to the strategy of Target Markets and have developed sales promotions targeting people near the stores location.

Members were trained in the area of inventory processing and tracking. It is a huge undertaking to come up with a system where there was none. Some customers who come into the store think that the store has been in operation for a long time. All of the displays were tastefully done; lounging chairs and small love seats are placed strategically through out the store creating a welcoming environment. The new clothing store was named (Sunny Days); it was deemed Sunny Days because it only opens on sunny days. On rainy days the store is closed due to the roof leaking.

AmeriCorps members: Donna Scaturro, Rochan Johnson, Debra Covington, Jullian Brigman and Hakeem Ali will leave this project with enough knowledge to run and or operate a small business.

Member Development: During the month of May members where educated in the area of: (Financial Prosperity), Understanding the Terms and Conditions of Credit. The workshop consisted of:

- a. A History of Consumer Credit, followed by Dept.
- b. People forgot credit is a privilege, not a source of income.
- c. The Lender's Point of View.
- d. The Four C's of Credit.
 - Character: refers to how well a consumer has managed his/her financial life in the past.
 - Capacity: is the amount of debt a consumer can realistically manage.
 - Collateral: refers to assets owned outright that could be used to secure debt.
 - Capital: is the total amount of cash a consumer has available.

Types and sources of credit; single-payment, installment credit, revolving credit. The role of the Credit Bureau was taught. How credit reporting works, how to make credit inquiries.

Lessons on (What is a Credit Report) and the Credit Report Components were scrutinized.

Strengthening Communities: Boaz & Ruth's opening of another venue in the Highland Park blighted commercial corridor has transformed the blight into bright. What was once a vacant run down section of a huge garage is now a delight to behold. The new store is called (Sunny Days) and its wonderful window displays are attractive; drawing a steady flow of customers from the community and Richmond Virginia's surrounding area.

In addition to the new clothing store, Boaz & Ruth held its 5th Annual Gala. The Gala not only helped to bring in funds which contribute to sustaining the Boaz & Ruth program; it also created the opportunity for people from all over Richmond and the surrounding area to network. Many new relationships are forged; relationships, that were unlikely. The rich and the poor come together in an effort to keep the Boaz & Ruth mission alive. People who have material means and people who do not are afforded the opportunity to interact and cast away the stereo type figures that we label each other with.

Ex-offenders are exposed to individuals who have never been incarcerated and have achieved a degree of success. Many of them share their personal struggles in an effort to show ex-offenders that with hard work and perseverance they too can achieve goals. One important lesson for all who attended the Boaz & Ruth Gala is: (all people are the same, we have the same needs and desires and anyone can make a mistake and recover from it).

Sustainability: Describe your program's efforts during this reporting period toward sustainability (defined in terms of media and marketing, volunteer/leader development, collaboration, fundraising/resource development or other areas that may assist the program toward self-sufficiency).

Boaz & Ruth opened a clothing store in the month of May 2008. It was named (Sunny Days). The Sunny Days clothing store has quite a selection, it can boast: something borrowed something blue, something old and something new. Community members flocked in to see the merchandise and it began selling right away. Sunny Days inventory consists of men, women and children's clothing; shoes, scarf's, belts, wedding dresses and other accessories. Also, the sales staff subtly included home accessories and furnishing in its wonderful displays; which can be brought for a reasonable price. Before its first two weeks were up, sales were significant, noteworthy enough to be counted as one of Boaz & Ruth's revenue makers.

The clothing store was named Sunny Days because it can only operate when it is not raining, the roof still leaks in some areas. Thus the store was deemed Sunny Days. Even though the store can only open for business on sunny days it is operating with a profit and contributing to keeping the doors of Boaz & Ruth open.

Challenges: Describe any challenges your program currently faces.

One challenge in May was recruiting and qualifying members for the program.

What strategy will you employ to address these challenges?

Staff had to consistently adjust the screening process and implement prerequisites such as:

- Ascertaining whether or not the potential member has transportation or if they are on a City bus line.
- Screening to see if they have a substance abuse history and if they are already in recovery.
- Establishing whether clients have a support network such as family, Alcoholic Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous sponsors and that they have been attending AA or NA meetings.

Assistance: Our program needs the following assistance from the Office on Volunteerism and Service (please be specific).

No information reported

Special Events: Describe a special event that your program has organized or participated in. Examples include service projects, community planning meetings, recognition events, etc.

Boaz & Ruth held its 6th ANNUAL RETREAT at Camp Hanover. The Retreat is time set aside for staff and all members to develop a sense of family and camaraderie. The primary purpose is relationship building. One new apprentice who just started the program stated that "I have always done everything for my self all of my life, never depending on other people. When we were introduced to the exercise of: (trusting people and fall back in their arms), I did not know how. Trusting people is so alien to me I didn't know if I could do it. Peers and staff had to coach me to do it and as I fell back into the arms of my peers tears were streaming down my face.

Another member stated "I never gravitated to people as fast as I have since being in the Boaz & Ruth program. The love and reception of the people in the program is so different to me. I never experienced anything like this. I am building relationships so fast it's awesome". Members and staff begin to open up and become more vocal during the Retreat, expressing held back emotions, crossing barriers, forging bonds that will last forever.

Member Highlight: Provide a brief description of one member's role in your program, along with a two or three sentence response from the member.

Charles Alexander started the Boaz & Ruth program as an AmeriCorps member February, 2008. He has no children and hopes to one day get married. Upon release from jail Charles stated, "I heard about Boaz & Ruth by word of mouth from a family member". I believed Boaz & Ruth would give me another chance to do something positive with my life. When asked the following questions he replied:

- a. A typical day as a member is very insightful for me. I look forward to the morning classes, especially the Core Belief and Healthy Relationships classes. The Core Belief classes are helping me to identify what is going on inside of me. The Healthy Relationship class taught by Mrs. Jane Tally is teaching me how to restore my broken relationships and what a healthy relationship consists of. As for me I have never been in a serious relationship so I am trying to learn. When I learn something new I go home and try it with family and friends. I am also in training with the Mountain Movers venue. I did not know there were any rules to moving furniture. I have learned how to track inventory and specific lifting procedures/techniques.
- b. My most enlighten experience was the Camp Hanover Retreat. I have a serious issue with trust. When I was first told I had to go I was pessimistic about it. However; once we arrived and I started interacting with the group, I began to let my guard down. I didn't think I could ever be comfortable around people I did not know. I would just do what I had to do and stay in my shell. Coming out of my shell was very enlightening and I will never forget it.
- c. The knowledge that I could be a part of an organization has changed me. I have learned I can trust some people and it is alright to come out of the shell I am so use to staying in. Being a part of the BRACE program is strengthening me affording me the opportunity to change.
- d. I would say the Boaz & Ruth/AmeriCorps program will give a person a chance, in a world where chances are not to frequently given. Many people will not take a chance on an ex-offender. However, The Boaz & Ruth / AmeriCorps program provides the opportunity for any individual to show what they are made of.

Notes: Please list any additional information that you believe the Office on Volunteerism

and Service needs to have.

No information reported

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1 Comments

[Steve Whitman](#) said on 6/9/08 at 01:11 PM

Veronica/Lloyd:

The May monthly report is very good, as always!

One thing to note: as we have discussed on several occasions, please be sure to conduct a thorough proof-read and spell-check of the report before submitting. Multiple typographical and grammatical errors have the potential of reflecting poorly on the program, and I know that you would not want that to happen.

Thank you for giving attention to this in future reports.

Steve

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