



AmeriCorps Member End of Year Evaluation (Philadelphia) January 2011

End of Term questionnaires were analyzed from 151 AmeriCorps members (“members”) who completed their terms by August 2010. There were 115 members who worked at K-8 school sites (“K-8”) and 36 members who worked at high school sites (“HS”), including CAAP (Classroom Academic Achievement Program), HiSTEP (High School Training and Enrichment Projects), and SSC (Bartram High School’s Student Success Center). Answers from these members were analyzed separately and are presented in separate tables.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Over 60% of the K-8 respondents were completing their first term of service and were full-time members. The majority of K-8 members (90%) did not relocate to Philadelphia to serve at EW. For HS members, over 80% were in their first term and a little over three-quarters (76%) were full-time and had not relocated to Philadelphia. When both groups of members were asked if they would recommend serving at EW to others, the majority (91%) said yes.

Overall Satisfaction

Members were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with serving at EW. The majority members (94%) in both groups responded that they were satisfied with their term of service and 97% felt like a part of the program or school in which they served. The K-8 members were slightly more satisfied with their terms of service than the HS members (78% versus 70%).

Most Satisfaction

Members were asked what had given them the most satisfaction about their terms of service. Both groups responded that it was working with youth that gave them the most satisfaction with their terms of service.

K-8 responses on what satisfied them the most included:

Learning how to best serve my community.

[This experience] helped me develop a passion for youth empowerment.

When I was ill the children motivated me.

The opportunity to build management skills.

Knowing that I made an impact on young, impressionable children and watching some transform to enjoy learning.

Seeing a difference in the behavior of students.

Working with the children and grooming and molding them into responsible community leaders and members.

HS responses on what satisfied them the most included:

My term of service allowed me to engage with positive teenagers who are determined to improve their living environment but I was also able to assist those who were indifferent [toward] improvement.

The experience and perspective gained working at public school.

The relationship I forged with the youth.

Making a positive impact on my students’ lives.

Being able to see the growth of my students.

The time I spent either working in the classroom or assisting students one-on-one.

Members were then asked to share a success story from their service experience. Success stories for K-8 and HS members were largely about academic youth changes in academic achievement and school engagement.

K-8 member-shared experiences on academic engagement included:

Teaching a student to read and do math.

Teaching a student with a low attention span to pay attention.

I tutored two 5th graders that graduated with my help.

Teaching children their letters and numbers.

HS member-shared experiences on academic engagement included:

- A student failed Algebra I in the first semester, but earned a C in the 2nd semester with tutoring.*
- Convincing a student to take school serious and change his grades.*
- Convinced a student to not drop out of school.*
- A student who spoke little English became more outgoing and had better grades.*

Other success stories included:

- Sitting with youth workers and hearing how meaningful their experience with me has been (K-8).*
- My kids and I will be performing with me in a talent show (K-8).*
- Helped a little boy come out of his shell (K-8).*
- A student who openly disliked me and refused to participate, joined the group by the end of the year (K-8).*
- Helping students achieve success in ways they could not have imagined (K-8).*
- One student resisted being in the group, but he has started to contribute (HS).*
- A student that previously hated me, told me he would miss me next year (HS).*
- I created a mural with other volunteers (HS).*

Personal Growth

Members were asked to reflect on their own personal growth during their term of service. Overwhelmingly, both groups of members attributed their experience with EducationWorks to growing in their professional skills, confidence and dedication to community service. The majority of all members (94% for K-8 and 89% for HS) responded that they had learned new skills that they could use in future professional positions. Almost all of the members (97%) believed they learned how to successfully work with others that are different from themselves as a result of their service. Over 80 percent of K-8 members and three-quarters of HS members felt that they did things that they never thought they could do during their service term. Almost all of the members (100% for HS members) felt that they made a difference in the life of at least one person.

Their terms of service also made over three-quarters of members (87% of K-8 and 83% of HS) more aware of current events and motivated them to feel that each person should give some of his/her time for his/her community (96% of K-8 and 100% of HS).

Future Plans

Finally, members were asked several questions regarding their future plans and aspirations. About a third of both groups planned to go into the field of Education (ranging from Early Childhood Education to K-12 Education to Higher Education). Other popular member career aspirations in both groups included medicine or healthcare service, social work, psychology and law.

Members were asked how their service affected their plans for the future. Although about three-quarters of members (K-8 and HS) said that serving at EW did not change their career goals, answers varied from gaining valuable experiences to learning about the career opportunities and to learning more about public education and working with youth.

K-8 member responses to how service at EW affected their plans for the future:

- Showed me all of the different personalities that children have.*
- It made me want to pursue a career in education.*
- Strengthened my interest in youth empowerment.*
- The education award is helping and gave me real life experience.*

HS member responses to how service at EW affected their plans for the future:

- [I] changed my major to child psychology.*
- My eyes were opened to the possibilities in the nonprofit sector.*
- It helped me gain experience and be certain I want to pursue social work.*
- My service at EW changed my plans extensively. I am now more focused on public schools as opposed to higher education.*
- I am more interested in working with teens from impoverished areas.*