

ACTION UPDATE

December 21, 1978

Holiday Greetings

ACTION is the thousands of men and women who serve through the Peace Corps, VISTA and our Older American Volunteer Programs. And while the mission of these volunteers is what we are all about, the reality is that none of these programs could function without the support of ACTION staff—both at headquarters and in the field.

I would like to take the opportunity during this holiday season to wish the staff well in the upcoming year and to congratulate you on the work you've done in 1978. It's been busy and sometimes frustrating, but I think we can feel proud of our many accomplishments.

Through our daily efforts we have supported our volunteers well. Our domestic and international programs are stronger and more successful than they've been in years. This is due in large part to the dedication of ACTION's staff. The role of the staff, although less visible than that of the volunteers, is just as essential to fulfilling ACTION's mandate to help the poor and the forgotten in this country and overseas.

Sam Brown
Director, ACTION



Grant Seeks Neighborhood Solutions to Urban Crime

John Lewis, ACTION's associate director for domestic operations, has announced the award of an ACTION-National League of Cities (NLC) demonstration grant to Detroit's Neighborhood Service Organization to combat insurance redlining in one of the city's low-income areas.

According to Lewis, Detroit was the first of several cities across the country to be selected for an ACTION-NLC demonstration grant to "test the concept of neighborhood-based solutions to urban crime by attacking the causes of crime."

The demonstration project will be administered by NLC. The league received a \$150,000 grant from ACTION in April, 1978 to assess neighborhood crime prevention efforts underway in the 50 states and to make sub-grants to model crime prevention projects in several cities.

Lewis announced the award to the Neighborhood Service Organization at a meeting in Detroit on November 20 attended by more than 50 community leaders, government officials and residents and business people in the Livernois section of the city. Rep. John Conyers Jr. of Michigan and Detroit City Council President Erma Henderson were among those on hand to discuss the project's goal.

"I am pleased to join with you in the initiation of an important project," Rep. Conyers told the community meeting. "We are trying to develop solutions at the local and community level."

"The problem of crime and the related problems of keeping businesses in our neighborhoods are inter-related and must be examined together."

Earlier, Lewis explained: "Insurance redlining, the blanket refusal of companies to give insurance to businesses and residential property owners in certain communities, plays a major role in the decay of city neighborhoods. As businesses close and houses and apartments become unliveable, the neighborhood becomes

blighted; crime becomes more pervasive and the cycle continues."

The \$15,000 grant provides for the assignment of five locally recruited VISTA volunteers to the Neighborhood Service Organization, a private non-profit human service agency that operates a variety of programs in Detroit.

The VISTA volunteers will assist community residents to gather information about neighborhood crime, conduct a survey on the issue of redlining and its effects, generate active citizen participation and aid the development or rejuvenation of business associations in Detroit's Livernois commercial area.

San Francisco, New Orleans to Receive Similar Grants

Early next year, ACTION and NLC plan to announce a demonstration grant to San Francisco's Community Boards Program, which works to resolve community disputes, such as assaults and juvenile crimes, through the use of panels made up of community residents. The grant, also for \$15,000, will enable five VISTA volunteers to work with community groups to expand the program.

In January, a similar grant will be awarded to the Treme Community Association in New Orleans to organize crime prevention services for juveniles and the aged in a public housing project near the French Quarter.

Lewis noted that deliberations are underway between ACTION and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration for a national program that would support neighborhood-based crime prevention efforts. The program could begin as early as next spring, pending Congressional approval.



Rep. John Conyers Jr., John Lewis, and Erma Henderson.

In this issue of ACTION Update we are highlighting the accomplishments of the volunteers who serve in the Senior Companion Program. Three SCP articles touch on some of the many aspects of this varied program through which 3,300 volunteers serve in 58 projects in 43 states.

Senior Companion Program

Awards Grants in Five States

Five states that previously had no Senior Companion Programs were awarded OAVP grants in September to develop Senior Companion demonstration projects. Companions serving in these new projects will help older persons achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living.

Each grant will total \$152,700 annually and will support 55 to 60 volunteers.

The projects will be designed to make the best use of Companions as advocates for clients who need rehabilitative and preventive health and social care. The Companions' work will be outlined in written plans developed by volunteer stations which coordinate the health and social needs of persons served with available community health and social services in the community.

The projects also will emphasize volunteer orientation and in-service training. They will promote greater community participation in the SCP advisory councils and an expansion of council functions into the community.

The first grantee, the All-Indian Pueblo Council in New Mexico, will sponsor a project for a number of Pueblo Tribes and in the city of Albuquerque. Volunteer placements in Pueblo health clinics, regional hospitals and the Albuquerque Urban Indian Center will be coordinated through the Inter-tribal Health Authority.

The Association for Inner-Community Development in Hayden Lake, Idaho will sponsor a

project serving an area with a 22 percent elderly population. The Panhandle District Health Department, County Extension Services, and the Idaho Health Systems Agency will be involved in the project. The project's advisory council will help interview, select and place Senior Companions with homebound clients.

The Bureau of Maine's Elderly will operate a project in Hancock and Washington Counties. Volunteer placement will be coordinated by the State Department of Public Health and the Bureau's network in this rural area. It is expected that 20 percent of the project's volunteers will be recruited from and serve on the Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation. This area, one of the poorest in the state, lacks any kind of homemaker-home health services.

Senior Companions in South Dakota will monitor health and social care plans for clients. They will be recruited by the Aging Service Center in Sioux Falls from an eligible population of 3,100. Volunteer activities will be coordinated by the Visiting Nurse Association and the South Dakota Social Services Adult Services and Aging Division.

The fifth demonstration project in Hawaii, will recruit Filipino, Chinese and Japanese volunteers from the urban Honolulu area. Client care plans will be developed by volunteer station staff jointly with the Senior Companions. These plans will contain progress goals for the persons served, a list of primary activities, monitoring procedures, and periodic assessment of whether there is a continuing need for care.

Senior Companions Assist Elderly to Maintain Independent Living

Senior Companions in Allegheny County, Pa., are proving to be a positive influence on the lives of the frail and isolated elderly they serve in the Pittsburgh area.

Ninety-five percent of the Allegheny County Senior Companions work in the homes of clients, helping them maintain independent lives outside of care facilities, assessing their needs and then working with caseworkers and supervisors to ensure these needs are met. All of the volunteers in the program serve as advocates, helping their clients receive Medicare, Medicaid, and SSI benefits, for example.

The Allegheny County SCP, one of the original 18 SCP projects funded in 1974, is now one of the largest in the country with 190 volunteers. At the program's volunteer recognition ceremony on November 17, ACTION's Deputy Director Mary King commented that the strength of the program lies in "The real caring and love that people have for one another." She

said that the national Senior Companion Program should be expanded so that "such good work could reach more people in need."

Director Edward Garrick feels the Pittsburgh SCP owes its success to its "grassroots feeling" even though it is concentrated in the highly urbanized Pittsburgh area.

"We're located in 12 neighborhoods which have many low-income elderly. Each neighborhood has a senior center which also serves as a neighborhood station for volunteers," says Garrick.

Staff from the station match volunteers to clients in the same neighborhood and also supervise the volunteers, explains Garrick. The close proximity of volunteer and recipient eliminates transportation problems and also gives client and volunteer an immediate sense of identification.

Senior Companions often are found for patients recently released from hospitals or other facili-



Deputy Director Mary King speaks at SCP volunteer recognition ceremony in Allegheny County, Pa.

ties. "When the volunteer goes into the home," according to Garrick, "he or she knows of other things that can be provided besides actual medical care." For instance, the volunteer may be able to find housing for the client or simply ease the transition from institution to home.

Pre-service and in-service training equips volunteers to be particularly responsive to their clients' needs. In training, they learn about social services available and also all physical and psychological aspects of aging such as death and dying, stress and depression, drug abuse, personal safety, and alcoholism. "We're helping them," Garrick says, "so that they can better serve."

Advocacy is also central. "The Senior Com-

panion Program takes the message into the homes of those people who don't know what they're entitled to," notes SCP Mary Walker, 63, who's been with the program for four years. Mrs. Walker has brought social security, legal aid, and rent rebate benefits to her clients. She also got an emergency loan from the urban redevelopment agency in Pittsburgh to repair a client's home.

Mrs. Walker believes deeply in advocacy. She has spoken on behalf of the elderly at utility, voter registration and other public meetings at the county courthouse and state building.

"I've seen so much help given to people who otherwise wouldn't have it. That keeps me going," she says.

SCP Survey Finds Companions Provide Support Services, Save Public Funds

Senior Companions can be a major factor in keeping the frail elderly from being placed in nursing homes. For each person kept out of a nursing home, there is an estimated savings of \$2,430 in public funds. Additionally, the Senior Companion Program has the potential of serving 2.5 million moderately and generally impaired elderly persons.

These are some of the findings of a study recently conducted by the evaluation division of ACTION's Office of Policy and Planning (OPP).

Elderly persons age 75 and older are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population and the prime candidates for eventual institutionalization. As the size of that age group increases, the demand grows for a variety of home-based health and social support services designated to help the elderly maintain their maximum level of independent living. Such support services include providing personal care, preparing meals, escorting clients to appointments, arranging for transportation or acting as advocates for clients by giving them information on available community services.

Twenty-six of the 29 SCP directors who re-

sponded to the OPP survey said Senior Companions are working in homes assisting clients to live independently so they will not have to go into institutions. Companions are also helping clients upon release from care facilities.

The study says that targeting Senior Companion efforts toward the 75-plus high risk population group would mean that those most in need would receive the most benefits. Maximum benefits could also be realized by making greater use of community, health and social services. Additional public funds could be saved by making more efficient use of home services, preventing or deferring institutional confinement and shortening institutional stays.

Recently, public attention has been directed toward the enormous costs of aiding a growing population of older persons. According to the study, while public policy should continue to focus on large-scale solutions to the health and social welfare problems of the elderly, massive bureaucratic solutions cannot substitute for care and attention on the individual, personal level. Public policy should examine even more closely such small-scale initiatives as those offered by the Senior Companion Program.



Bob Ivory, Director of Community Resources Division, United Way (left) and MAP Director John Fisler.

ACTION FUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For the past two years, Cincinnati business executives from companies such as General Electric, Procter and Gamble, First National Bank and Ernst & Ernst Public Accounting have been serving as part-time volunteer consultants to leaders of inner-city neighborhood and community organizations. In sharing their expertise with non-profit agencies that bring needed human services to low-income persons, these 19 volunteers are pioneering in what may become an ACTION national urban volunteer program.

The Cincinnati pilot, called the Management Assistance Program, or MAP, is sponsored by the Cincinnati United Way/Community Chest. MAP funding in 1977 was an \$18,000 ACTION grant that covered operational support costs; three part-time Community Chest volunteers comprised the staff. In 1978, ACTION awarded a \$15,000 grant matched by \$13,000 from the Chest to cover costs and hire a full-time MAP

director.

The Cincinnati MAP is a prototype of the Technical and Management Assistance (TMA) component of ACTION's proposed Urban Volunteer Corps. In addition to managerial assistance, ACTION's TMA programs will offer technical assistance as provided by volunteer architects, lawyers, planners, and artisans. A second component will use volunteers to provide technical assistance and consumer counseling to persons living on fixed incomes.

ACTION Director Sam Brown estimates that about 35,000 part-time urban volunteers would be enlisted nationally in projects funded only after active consultation with and concurrence by locally elected officials.

"It is important to add that the United Way/Community Chest vehicle used in the Cincinnati MAP is but one of many lead agencies that could sponsor TMA programs," Brown said.

"We want to stress the decentralized nature of the TMA idea. Local volunteers and resources will be matched with local needs. Mayoral involvement in agency selection will ensure city-wide as well as neighborhood-wide benefits."

Local lead agencies could be Community Action Programs, Urban Leagues, United Ways, Catholic Charities, mayors' offices and coalitions of

neighborhoods, Brown said. Like the Cincinnati MAP's, their clients would include day care and health centers, neighborhood coalitions, development corporations, youth and elderly groups, credit unions, and community councils.

For example, one of MAP's 19 clients was Cincinnati's Free Store, a non-profit organization that provides the basic survival necessities -- food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention -- to about 1,000 persons a month. It is now Cincinnati's fifth largest receiver of referrals. When the Red Cross declares a disaster, Free Store becomes its emergency food arm, maintaining rescue and food delivery operations during the crisis.

The Free Store was started in 1969 by three men who made furniture and food deliveries to the needy. By 1977, the Free Store had a staff of 79. But it had no books, no ledgers, no journals, no inventory mechanisms, no internal controls, and no more room in the church basement that had once housed three people.

In 1977, Bob Ivory, then the MAP director, met with Free Store director Steven Gibbs. After a pre-assessment of the Free Store's needs, Ivory sent MAP volunteer Kathy Luby, Ernst and Ernst's senior financial analyst, to review Free Store's economic situation.

Gibbs and Luby signed a MAP agreement ensuring that both parties are working towards the same end, and Luby set up a bookkeeping, inventory and payroll system. She volunteered 60 hours over a four-month period -- an in-kind donation worth an estimated \$4,000. The average MAP volunteer donates about 20 hours over a two- to six-month period.

Free Store, thanks to Luby, now has an accounting system to keep track of the grants and donations on which it survives. The staff can inventory the surplus food, clothing and furniture donations Free Store receives. They know exactly, every day, how much money they have, owe and spend. They can make plans to broaden and improve their services.

ACTION EEO Counselors Participate in Training Conference

ACTION's Office of Compliance held a training seminar for field and headquarters Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Counselors on November 6-9 in Denver, Co. The training, provided by the U.S. Civil Service Commission and by agency staff members, focused on counseling techniques, the role of personnel management and labor relations, and agency policy and procedures affecting equal employment opportunities.

The session was part of a continuing agency program to orient and train EEO counselors, inform them of changes in existing Equal Employment Opportunity regulations, and apprise them of new regulations. Lecturers at the seminar included ACTION staff from the personnel, general counsel and compliance offices and Region VIII.

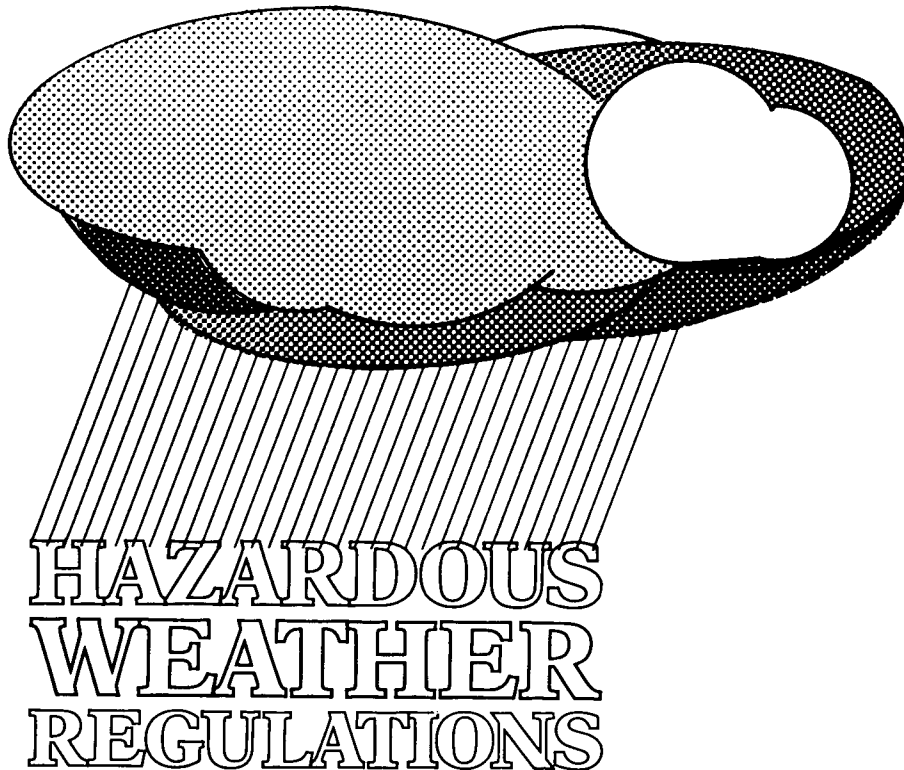
EEO counselors are available to all agency employees or applicants for employment who believe they have been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or physical or mental handicap. Counselors should be contacted within 30 days

of the alleged discrimination incident and have 21 days to effect informal resolution.

Headquarters EEO Counselors are: Barbara Adams, Office of Recruitment and Communications, ext. 43867; Clinton Ashley, Administration and Finance, ext. 47412, Fannie Bush, Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation, ext. 47262; William Knight, International Operations, ext. 43412; Veronica Priddy, International Operations, ext. 45492; and Evelyn Robinson, International Operations, ext. 43180.

Field EEO Counselors are: Margaret Sellar, Region I; William Vega, Region II; Rosemary Taylor, Region III; Eulalie Ferguson, Region IV; Sharron Mathews, Region V; Max Vigil, Region VI; Katherine Wilson, Region VII; Alexander Ramirez, Region VIII; Verdell Daniel, Region IX; and Geraldine Sorlie, Region X.

For further information, please contact Jeanne Snowden, Equal Opportunity Specialist, Equal Opportunity Division, ext. 45940.



With the advent of winter and the accompanying inclement weather—SNOW and SLEET—we'd like to clarify official agency leave policy on bad weather days.

Agency policy states that when hazardous weather justifies the closing of offices in a particular locality, employees may be granted administrative leave—leave which doesn't count against earned annual or sick leave—during that period.

The director of the agency's Personnel Management Division, at the instruction of the Civil Service Commission, determines when weather conditions in the Washington metropolitan area warrant administrative leave. Regional and country directors determine when such conditions merit administrative leave in their respective areas.

When the need for early dismissal because of bad weather is officially determined, employees may be given administrative leave. However, those employees who left work before dismissal was authorized must take annual leave.

Under the flexitime system, early dismissal will affect individuals differently depending upon

their scheduled workday. Administrative leave due to early dismissal may not exceed the difference between the time of that dismissal and the end of the public work band—5 P.M. As an example, if a 3 P.M. dismissal were authorized, up to two hours of administrative leave would be granted. An employee who usually works until 6 P.M. would, therefore, leave at 4 P.M. If a 1 P.M. dismissal were authorized, granting four hours of administrative leave, that same employee would leave at 2 P.M.

The amount of administrative leave granted tardy employees during hazardous weather is determined on a case by case basis depending on conditions prevailing between the employee's home and the workplace. Supervisors may excuse reasonable absences in such cases upon specific authority of the Director.

Factors considered in granting administrative leave in inclement weather include the following: distance between employee's residence and place of work, severity of weather conditions where employees live, methods of transportation and specific efforts the employee makes to get to work.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Convention Meets in Omaha

They came from all over the United States to Omaha, Neb. to attend a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Convention and Third World Conference co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska.

Of the 125 RPCVs and some 60 other participants who attended the conference Nov. 16 to 18, many came because they had fond memories of the Peace Corps and wanted to stay in touch, some were interested in forming a national alumni organization, while still others had hopes of renewing old acquaintances.

The former volunteers ranged in age from 23 to 72 and had served in the Peace Corps as long ago as the early Sixties and as recently as four months ago. They represented a cross-section of Americans who had spent two years of their lives working in developing countries to fight poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease.

The first returned Peace Corps volunteer convention took place in 1965 in Washington, D.C. and since that initial conference, more than 70,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps in over 65 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

As more and more volunteers returned from their two-year assignments, it became natural that these people who shared an intense cross-cultural experience would have a lot in common and begin to seek each other out.

Greg Flakus, one of the organizers of the Omaha RPCV conference, said that the idea for the conference came to him in 1975 when he returned from the Peace Corps in the Philippines.

"I found that when I ran into other former volunteers, no matter what country we had served in we basically shared the same experience. In March of 1977, a group of RPCVs in Omaha started making contact with other groups around the country and these groups expressed an interest in the idea," Flakus said.

As the idea for the convention took root, the Peace Corps joined with the Nebraska area RPCVs and with the University of Nebraska to co-sponsor the second annual Third World conference, a meeting of international studies experts and academics from throughout the United States. Both former Peace Corps Director Carolyn Payton and ACTION Director Sam Brown agreed to speak to the group and to hear its concerns.

Once the conference had been set, a series of panels on Peace Corps issues was arranged. These panels were concerned with discussing the directions of the Peace Corps today such as appropriate technology concerns, basic human needs programming and development education. The goals of panels toward the end of the conference were to begin setting up some sort of national organization and to discuss the nature of that organization.

The organizational meetings held to decide whether to set up a national organization or whether to have a third returned Peace Corps volunteer convention sparked lively debate. Sam Brown agreed with the RPCVs that any organizing would have to be done by them and not by Peace Corps headquarters in Washington.

The group set up a steering committee with representation from all geographical areas of the U.S. The second RPCV convention agreed to hold a meeting next year, again in Omaha. The steering committee will coordinate communication between local RPCV groups, work to develop grass roots organizations and propose a charter for an independent national organization.

As Greg Flakus said, "We've made a beginning this year and we're now working with people all over the country. Our goal now is to get something going."

Persons wishing to contact the steering committee may write Flakus at P. O. Box 14411, Omaha, Neb. 68124.

Regional Director's Spotlight: John Keller

John Keller, Director of ACTION's Region X, which includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska, brings to his post a history of service and commitment to older persons and to children that dates back to the founding of the Foster Grandparent Program.

As the director of treatment services in a home for emotionally disturbed children in Fargo, N.D. from 1962 to 1965, Keller observed that the children related most strongly to the only two older persons on the staff—the cook and the janitor. “The attachment that the children had for them led me to believe that children could relate more honestly and comfortably to older persons,” he said.

This experience led to his involvement in one of the first Foster Grandparent projects in the nation—a project begun on an experimental basis in St. Cloud, Minn. in 1965. Keller was appointed project director of the volunteer grandparents working with “hard to reach” and “problem” children.



“The first years with FGP were the most exciting, delightful experiences I’ve ever had,” he says.

Keller headed the St. Cloud Project until March 1967, when he joined the national staff of HEW as an FGP program specialist. In February, 1971, he became the national director of FGP and RSVP. Both programs were transferred from HEW to ACTION when the agency was created in 1971.

“The attitudes of older people have changed since 1965,” Keller emphasizes. “Then they were generally shy, lacked confidence, and believed what society told them about no longer being useful. But they’re much more aggressive

advocates for needs in their communities now,” he states.

“Successes have bred confidence and led them to demand a new social justice for older persons. That change has been one of the most satisfying things of all.”

Keller is widely recognized as an authority on the potential and problems of older Americans, and is sought after as a keynote speaker for national and regional conventions that deal with issues of older persons. “I believe the most serious social problems in America are loneliness and isolation,” Keller points out, “even when people live close to one another. The exciting thing about our programs is that they go right to

the heart of that problem by bringing people together to help and assist others.”

Keller also brings a unique management approach to his duties as ACTION Regional Director. “As a manager, I believe that the working day should be joyful and rewarding—an experience to look forward to each day,” he says.

“The more people accomplish, the more excited they become about their work. You get the most productivity from people by establishing a healthy work environment.”

Director in the Pacific Northwest since September, 1976, Keller believes that Region X has a greater diversity of programs than most regions.

“Our Alaska volunteer programs are especially unique,” he noted. “Alaska comes closest of all to giving our VISTA volunteers a Third World Peace Corps-type experience while serving in the U.S. We also have a mix of urban and rural programs that offers a great deal of flexibility and challenge to our staff.”

Demonstration Project Tests Service-Learning Concept

The National Student Volunteer Program (NSVP) is administering the first in a series of three demonstration projects to test the impact of service-learning on juvenile offenders.

In September 1978, ACTION awarded an initial one-year grant of \$73,659 to Partners School in Denver, Colo. to test the effect of a service-learning experience on the attitudinal, skill and academic development of students. Partners School, part of the Denver Public School system, deals with students with learning and behavior problems. The school offers each student an individualized education program, group counseling, and, for at least three hours a week, the companionship of an adult. Additionally, the school staff works cooperatively with each student's family.

Beginning this February, 20 students, all property offenders, will be involved in a six-month program in which they will develop community service projects and examine their experience in classroom situations.

Group seminars will help students prepare themselves for work in the community, to reflect on their experiences, and to assess the end product of their service efforts.

Students also will participate in an individualized academic program to help them acquire

the skills and knowledge needed to perform their work. They will be assisted by volunteer teacher aides, and, on a one-to-one basis, by adult community volunteers who will act as role models.

Partners School is the first site of this demonstration project, which also is slated for implementation in other locations. Grants will be considered for second and third year renewals based on the success of the projects.

Academic achievement, attitudes and skills of the participating students will be compared with those of several groups of 20 non-participating students to help evaluate the effectiveness of the service-learning model.

"The youths will have real responsibilities," says Betsey Herrick of NSVP. "They will be involved in planning and decision-making. This is the first time the service-learning concept has ever been applied to juvenile offenders."

The youths initially will be involved in traditional service settings such as nursing homes or hospitals. Based on their service and perceptions of community needs, the youths will develop and follow through on plans for a project that will leave the community something it didn't originally have, such as a hotline or a home for runaways.

The staff of ACTION Update would like to hear from its readers. If you have any suggestions or comments, please contact writer/editors Patita McEvoy or Judy Kusheloff on Ext. 48373.
