

Army of volunteers spruce up New Orleans schools

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200 community volunteers joined 500 AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Corps) members in making some much-needed improvements at four Recovery School District (RSD) schools on Make A Difference Day, Saturday, Oct. 28, in New Orleans.

The Recovery School District, which was created and is operated by the Louisiana Department of Education, is an organization dedicated to turning underperforming schools into successful learning institutions.

AmeriCorps*NCCC members and community volunteers cleaned up four New Orleans schools: Frederick A. Douglass High School, Charles R. Drew Elementary School, L.E. Rabouin Career Magnet School and McDonogh #42 School. The projects focused on interior painting and on-site school maintenance.

AmeriCorps*NCCC, a team-based national service program for youth aged 18-24, staged teams near the Gulf Coast before Hurricane Katrina struck last August and was among the first federal organizations to respond to what has been called the largest disaster in U.S. history. All members are certified in CPR, first aid, and disaster response. AmeriCorps*NCCC has responded to every national disaster since the program was established in 1994.

Since August 2005, 1,900 NCCC members have served more than 800,000 hours in the Gulf Coast on over 350 relief and recovery projects.

City Year Louisiana used the day to improve conditions at John McDonogh Senior High School. An "action tank" for national service, City Year seeks to demonstrate, improve and promote the concept of national service as a means of building a stronger democracy.

A proud member of the AmeriCorps network, City Year unites over 1,000 diverse young adults ages 17-24 in 16 communities in the United States and Johannesburg, South Africa. These young people commit to a demanding year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. After a successful year of service in the Greater Baton Rouge area, City Year Louisiana is piloting a program in New Orleans beginning in 2006.