



*Letter from Patrick Corvington to the 19th Annual Conference of the
Community College National Center for Community Engagement*

Dear Friends:

I want to first extend my thanks to Lyvier Conss for the invitation to address the 19th annual conference of the Community College National Center for Community Engagement and for her leadership and commitment to civic engagement in higher education. I regret that my schedule does not permit me to be there in person, but as the new CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, I did not want this opportunity to pass without letting you know how much we at the Corporation value the work you do. College students, including those at the nation's community colleges have always been on the frontlines of social change in America. Today, with enrollments in community colleges rising and a renewed national commitment to your institutions, we have a unique opportunity to expand opportunities for service to an even larger and more diverse population of students.

We at the Corporation have long recognized the indispensable role that our nation's colleges play in the service movement. In fact, I want to extend a special note of congratulations to the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll winners in the audience. For those of you unfamiliar with the Honor Roll, it is the highest Federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement. This year's competition was intense and resulted in 736 colleges and universities being placed on the Honor Roll. Approximately 10% of the 2009 Honor Roll winners are from community colleges, many of whom are at this conference. And this year, I am proud to note that of the six top winners, one was a community college ~ Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, New Jersey. Congratulations to all of the 2009 winners. I look forward to receiving applications from EACH of you for the 2010 Honor Roll, as you demonstrate the new and creative ways to engage students in service throughout the year.

I am fortunate to be leading the Corporation at a time when President Obama and the Congress have made an historic investment in the belief that national service can be a solution to many of the problems facing this nation. With the passage of the Kennedy Serve America Act in 2009, all of us in the service movement are challenged to fulfill the President's promise to place citizen service at the center of our response to big national problems. The Serve America Act also challenges us to give more people of all ages and



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background the opportunity to serve. It asks us to build the capacity of individuals, organizations and communities by giving them the tools they need to succeed. And it calls upon us to embrace innovation by expanding proven programs and seeding promising emerging ones.

College students have long been leaders in tackling community problems, whether related to poverty and homelessness, the drop-out crisis, or the environment and natural disasters. In the 2008-09 academic year, more than three million college students contributed over 300 million hours of service. College students ran after-school programs, tutored at-risk youth, built and weatherized homes, offered computer classes, restored natural parks, and much more.

This year, community colleges have an incredible opportunity to tackle additional community problems, as part of the Corporation's new initiative, Youth Engagement Zones. You'll hear more about that program shortly.

In closing, I just want to reinforce the important role that colleges and universities play in the broader national service movement. From incorporating service-learning into the classroom to sponsoring part-time AmeriCorps members to tutor in an enrichment program, community colleges are giving life to service in higher education. Your efforts will affect communities and students for many years to come. Thank you for your extraordinary commitment to service and civic engagement.

Have a great conference and keep up the great work.

Patrick Corvington, CEO
The Corporation for National and Community Service



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