

2008 ANNUAL REPORT



TRANSFORMING *Communities*
TRANSFORMING *Lives*



Vision

Inspiring action to
change Minnesota communities
for the better.

Mission

ServeMinnesota is a catalyst for
positive social change, working with
AmeriCorps and community partners
to meet critical needs in Minnesota.

We get measurable results by:

Innovation: Researching and
applying the best methods to
create powerful local solutions.

Investment: Raising and allocating
funds for AmeriCorps program
development, and people serving in
those programs, to maximize return.

Alignment: Aligning with local
community and government
priorities and setting consistent
program standards to ensure
measurable results.



Dear Friends,

ServeMinnesota, our state's Commission for National and Community Service, embraces this opportunity to translate a myriad of individual accomplishments and contributions into a powerful snapshot of how AmeriCorps programs and their partners are improving Minnesota communities and Minnesotans' lives.

Economic times are exerting enormous pressure on the public sector to meet growing need. Now more than ever, our charge is to maximize the outcomes of the investments made by our programs, people and partners. One thing we know for sure, supporting AmeriCorps members with solid training, strong management, and compelling service results in impressive, quantifiable results. Underlying the changes we can document in spreadsheets, however, are hundreds of incredible stories of how AmeriCorps members themselves are transformed as they dig in day after day to get things done and make a difference for the people of our state.

Every one of our 726 AmeriCorps members has a story that deserves an audience. This year, we wanted to share the experiences of a few whose reflections exemplify how national service and individual biography intersect.

You will also find featured two programs, The Minnesota Reading Corps and the new Minnesota Math Corps, which are making measurable improvements in two foundational education issues. We are grateful for our many partners. Your support makes it possible to create the conditions for community and personal change.

ServeMinnesota is an innovative catalyst for statewide community service. We welcome your continued support and interest as we work together to keep finding ways to expand the impact of AmeriCorps in Minnesota.

Audrey Suker
Executive Director

Bob Rumpza
Board Chair

Getting Things Done

ACROSS MINNESOTA



126

AmeriCorps
members



1,400

individuals mentored

32,257

volunteers recruited,
coordinated or
supported by our
programs



32,143

disadvantaged
children and youth
served





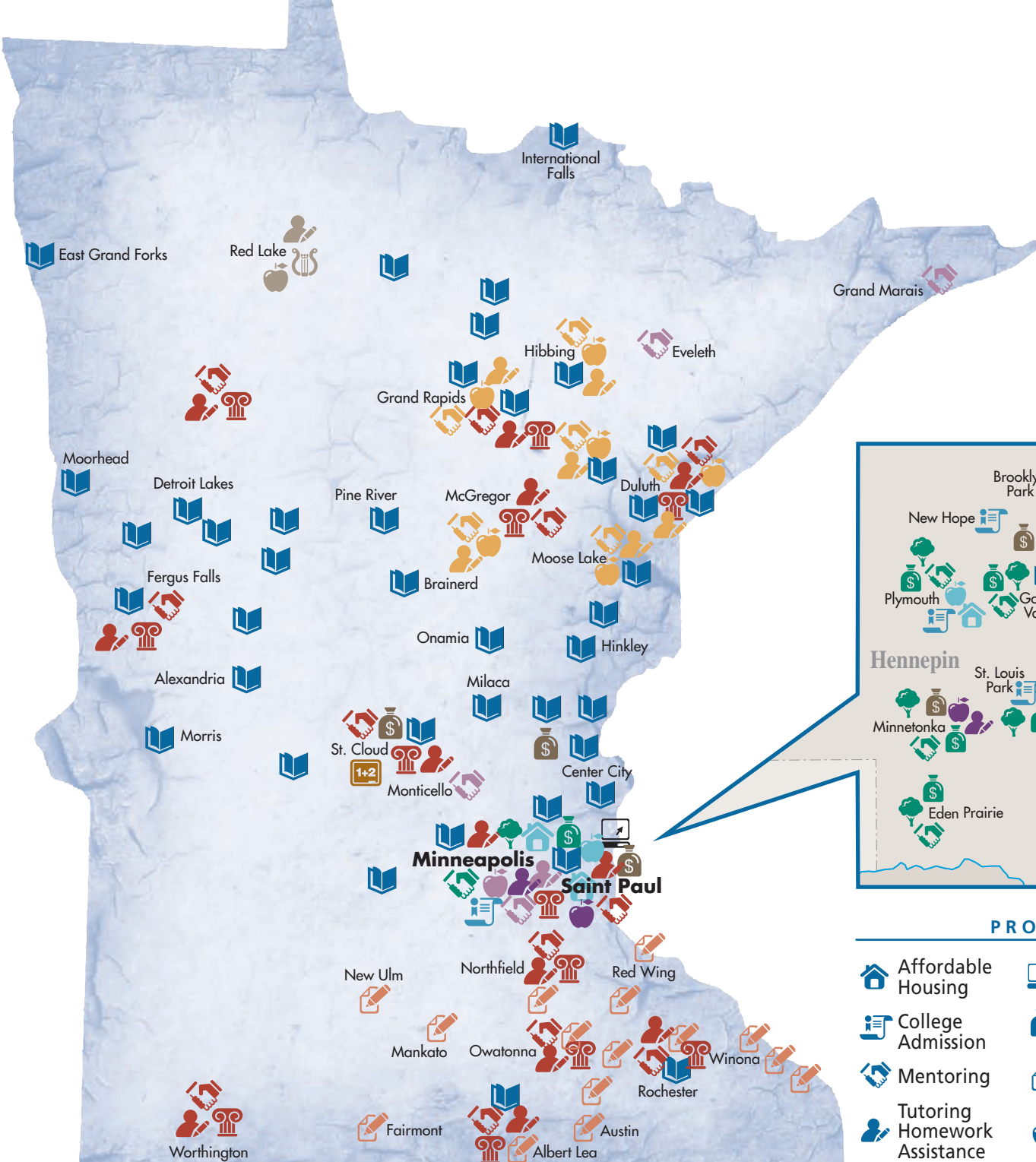
Transforming Communities

ACROSS MINNESOTA

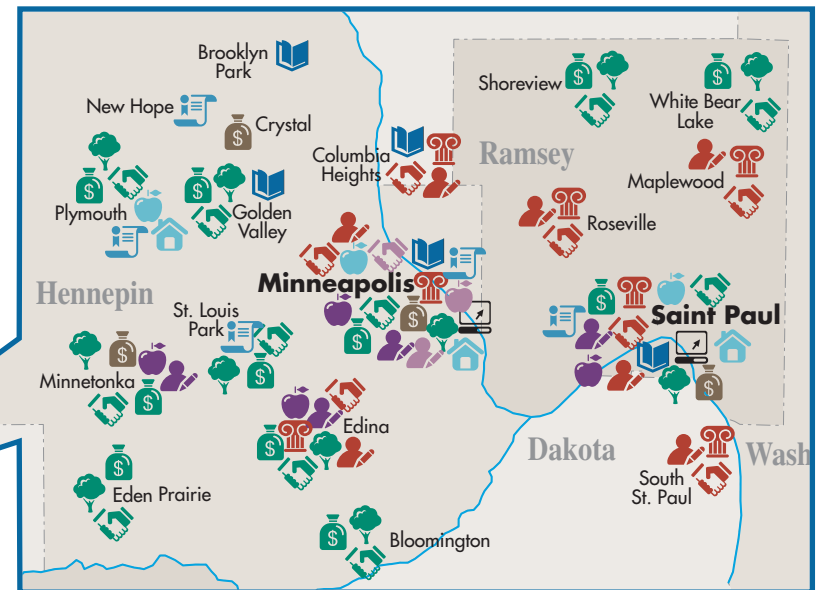
The 2007-2008 program year proved once again why the tagline for AmeriCorps is "Getting Things Done." From building houses to tutoring children, AmeriCorps members, through the support of their community partners, made significant improvements in the lives of Minnesotans who needed help. ServeMinnesota provides AmeriCorps grants to organizations across Minnesota to recruit, fund, and train members who serve their communities. AmeriCorps members are adults of all ages who commit to serve for one or two years in exchange for a modest living allowance and an education award.

AmeriCorps Program Grants 07 – 08

Program	Members	Grant Amount	Website	Program Impact
● Admission Possible	44	\$603,900	admissionpossible.org	
● AmeriCorps READS Initiative	30	\$393,258	smifoundation.org	
● City of Lakes AmeriCorps	65	\$631,315	commed.mpls.k12.mn.us/AmeriCorps.html	
● Community Technology Empowerment Project	29	\$343,056	technologypower.org	
● Minnesota Alliance with Youth	60	\$823,483	mnyouth.net	
● Minnesota Math Corps	Planning Grant	\$88,420	stcloudstate.edu/ameriCorps/focus.asp	
● Minnesota Reading Corps	235	\$2,755,560	minnesotareadingcorps.org	
● Multicultural Communities in Action	46	\$557,992	commonbond.org/ameriCorps	
● Partners in Service to America	34	\$343,117	rlnn.com/main/AmeriCorp.html	
● People Active in Revitalizing Communities	53	\$281,781	treetrust.org	
● True North AmeriCorps	75	\$686,250	truenorthamericorps.org	
● Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity and PPL	32	\$438,861	tchabitat.org/ameriCorps.html	
● Work in Progress	23	\$296,349	rise.org/ameriCorps	



**Across Minnesota,
AmeriCorps has
726 members in over
370 service sites.**



PROGRAM IMPACT LEGEND

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Affordable Housing | Digital Divide, Computer Education | Literacy Tutoring |
| College Admission | Employment | Environmental Programs |
| Mentoring | Social/emotional Development & School Readiness Skills | Math Tutoring |
| Tutoring Homework Assistance | After-school Programs | Leadership & Civic Engagement |
| | | Cultural Activities |



Minnesota Reading Corps

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

All across the state, there are more than 235 AmeriCorps members providing intensive tutoring to thousands of children age three to grade 3 who have fallen behind in their literacy skills become confident, competent readers with brighter futures. In its fifth year, the Minnesota Reading Corps expanded its reach, generating impressive literacy results, attracting additional partners and funders, and growing interest and attention from educational, political and business leaders.



A unique tutoring program

Minnesota Reading Corps was launched in 2003, targeting Minnesota children struggling to achieve reading proficiency by 3rd grade. Former state legislator Alice Seagren, ServeMinnesota Board member and now State Education Commissioner, was a leader in launching the Minnesota Reading Corps. She capitalized on her intersecting roles, visualizing national service as a strategy to bring more tutors to the front lines and to capitalize on the AmeriCorps program as a vehicle for transforming the way literacy tutoring occurs.

Bridging literacy science and classroom needs

The Minnesota Reading Corps makes it uniquely possible to deploy large numbers of AmeriCorps members – highly trained, motivated, and

consistent people power – into pre-school and K-3 settings. These members help to implement a research-based, data-driven model of literacy instruction firmly grounded in the science of how children *best* learn to read. The substantial one or two-year service commitment makes it cost-effective to invest the training and expert support necessary to provide each participating child with individualized instruction that aligns precisely with their specific literacy challenges.

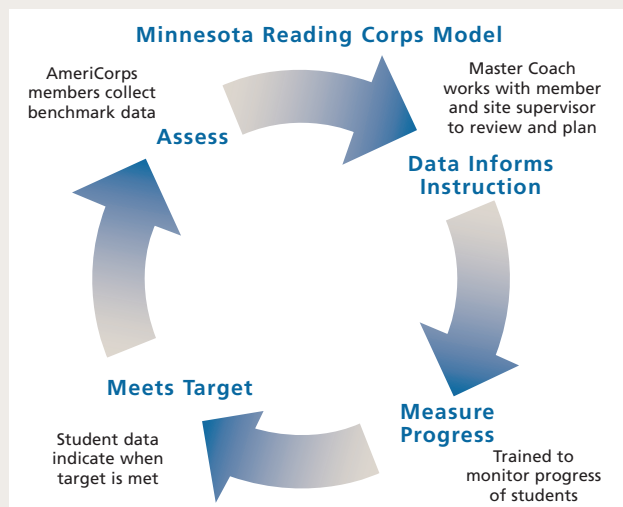
Getting results for individual children

For the fourth consecutive year, outside evaluators found that pre-schoolers participating in the Reading Corps started kindergarten significantly more prepared in literacy skills than other children. Nearly 80% of participating children in grades K-3 acquired literacy skills at a rate that allowed them to “catch up” to grade level requirements.

These compelling results feed our impassioned vision that all Minnesota children ages three to grade 3 who qualify will have access to the program and will meet reading standards by third grade.

Influencing change within the education system

This year over 70% of literacy supervisors reported that the Minnesota Reading Corps is key to increased use of assessment data and improved literacy instruction. Partner sites report growing capacity to use data to identify student literacy needs, select specific interventions, monitor progress, change tutoring strategies, and to share updates more effectively with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders.



SIGNS OF SUCCESS!

- 80% of participating children in grades K-3 acquired literacy skills at a rate that allowed them to “catch up” to grade level requirements.
- 70% of literacy supervisors reported that the Minnesota Reading Corps is key to increased use of assessment data and improved literacy instruction.
- Over 80% of Minnesota Reading Corps Members say they will consider a career involving children because of their experience and will continue volunteering in schools.

Inspiring lifelong commitment

Deeply immersed in up close and personal experiences with children who shift from failure to accomplishment, Minnesota Reading Corps members intend to stay involved in education issues when their service ends. Over 80% report that they will consider a career involving children because of their experience and will continue volunteering in schools. Close to 100% indicate they will continue to promote childhood literacy.





2008 state tests indicate 38%, or 100,000 of Minnesota's 4th-8th grade students, are unable to demonstrate proficient math skills for their grade level.

This year ServeMinnesota laid the groundwork for a new AmeriCorps program, the Minnesota Math Corps, which will draw upon the successful Minnesota Reading Corps model to target an equally critical education priority.

The Challenge

Today's economy relies increasingly upon growth and innovation in the science, engineering and medical sectors where the 2004-2014 job growth projection is 21.4% compared to 13% for all other occupations. Children who fail to acquire advanced math skills will become adults who are ill equipped to secure jobs within expanding industries. Experts agree that even students pursuing non-scientific and non-mathematical specialties will increasingly need the ability to apply math skills within a variety of professions.

Higher Math Standards

All Minnesota children will soon face more immediate consequences if they cannot keep pace with rising state, national and global demands for elevated math skills. Minnesota's new math and science standards include an 8th grade Algebra requirement for all students.

Beginning with the class of 2010, Minnesota high school juniors will be required to obtain passing scores on the new statewide graduation test (GRAD) that will include higher-level algebra based mathematics. Students who do not pass the GRAD in math cannot graduate from high school and will be vulnerable to the repercussions of future limitations on career and success.

Service as a Strategy

Business and education leaders are pursuing strategies to reduce the gap between higher-level math requirements and the large number of students who already struggled under previous standards. ServeMinnesota is confident that national service has a role in the solution and is stepping up now to help more children catch up to their peers and meet the needs of a competitive global economy.

Getting Started

A planning grant to St. Cloud State University supported the development of the Minnesota Math Corps. A technical advisory team including math experts and school professionals will guide professionally trained and supported AmeriCorps members to provide research-based, individualized tutoring to help fourth-eighth grade students improve math skills in five St. Cloud schools in the 2008-2009 academic year.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Profiles in Service

The real power behind ServeMinnesota's success in addressing critical needs across the state comes from the skills, passion and commitment of the over 726 AmeriCorps members that served across the state of Minnesota in program year 2007-2008.

Together they served more than 813,000 hours. Their backgrounds are as diverse as the communities in which they serve. They recruit volunteers, clean up rivers, build houses, support teachers, and bring a smile into a child's life every day. Most of them however would tell you that the opportunity to serve their community brought as much to their lives as they gave to others. Here are some of their stories.

Bashan Abille

**AmeriCorps Member
Multicultural Communities in Action**

Bashan came to Minnesota three years ago from Kenya where her family sought refuge from conflict in Somalia. Bashan uses her English, Swahili and Somali language skills in her service within the Multicultural Communities in Action program, where she serves low-income children and their families living within the St. Paul Skyline Towers community to promote academic and social success.

"Two years ago, I never thought I would be in a position to make a difference. I was so afraid even to talk with someone new. I had no idea how to sit with a kid and be of any help. Now I will always have incredible freedom because I can engage in conversation with anyone, anywhere. That's thanks to the children teaching me that I can truly make a big difference. I work within the whole community so each day I see first-hand how changing just one person's life changes the lives of many people. There is no way I can ever stop. Everyone has something to give that is needed."



*"Two years ago,
I never thought I would
be in a position to
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Now I will always have
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TRANSFORMING LIVES

Profiles in Service

Bernard L. Turner

**AmeriCorps Member
Minnesota Reading Corps**

As a second-year Minnesota Reading Corps member charged with recruiting, training and supporting a cadre of volunteer tutors working one-on-one to help Head Start pre-school children learn critical early literacy skills, Bernard L. Turner's service is fueled by first-hand appreciation for the impact one community volunteer can make.

Extremely motivated to enlist as many volunteer tutors as possible, Bernard likes to begin at the beginning by sharing with potential volunteers his story of growing up in New York City schools and being promoted all the way to 8th grade with barely second grade reading skills. It was not until he won the lead role in a church play that his fiercely guarded secret and long time source of embarrassment was discovered by the play's director Barbara Richards.

As Bernard tells it, he had compensated for his inability to read by becoming a master memorizer. Mrs. Richards caught on to the deficit beneath the talent. "She looked straight at me and said, 'Okay, so you can't read this book.

That's okay. A lot of people can't read. But you are going to learn and you are going to come here every day this summer to read with me and you will do homework, too.'"

Mrs. Richards tutored Bernard every day for the rest of that summer and twice a week, before school and after school, for the next two years, until by 10th grade he had caught up. When Bernard discovered the Minnesota Reading Corps some 20 years later it triggered a long-buried memory. "When I first began my service, I had all but forgotten about the struggle to read. It was hidden, and so long ago. Now I read everything I get my hands on, so it became easy for even me to take literacy for granted. I had to pick up the phone and call Mrs. Richards. I had to tell her how through AmeriCorps I was not only giving back myself, but was recruiting more people to become "Mrs. Richards."

The thing is, Mrs. Richards didn't embarrass me. There is nothing worse than knowing you are in the special group or being called out in class to read when you can't. It was horrible, tortuous, to sit in that seat and have everyone staring and laughing at you.

"Serving with AmeriCorps, I have discovered my mission. This journey will not end after these two years; I will work on literacy issues for life. It was nothing short of destiny that I ducked my head into a door two years ago, saw a bunch of grey t-shirts, and heard about this reading thing."

That's why I know there is such a unique role that volunteers and AmeriCorps members can fill. Some kids just can't catch up or learn well in a big group. If someone had caught me early like the Minnesota Reading Corps does, maybe I would have had a fighting chance. Mrs. Richards gave me the gift of reading and in doing so, gave me a different life. I tell volunteers their contribution truly is about changing children's lives. It is about giving a gift that these children will take with them and that no one can ever take away.

This program has taught me that the need is huge. There are so many little Bernards sitting out there praying not to be called upon to read and who need the one-on-one focus that our trained volunteers give.

Serving with AmeriCorps, I have discovered my mission. This journey will not end after these two years; I will work on literacy issues for life. It was nothing short of destiny that I ducked my head into a door two years ago, saw a bunch of grey t-shirts, and heard about this reading thing."

*"If someone had caught me
at the preschool level, maybe I would
have had a fighting chance."*





Lakeyta Potter

AmeriCorps Member
Minnesota Alliance with Youth

Lakeyta Potter facilitates after-school activities with the Worthington Integration Collaborative to build the academic and leadership skills of low-income, ethnically diverse high school kids. Although she had no experience working with teenagers when she began her service, Lakeyta now plans to become a high school counselor and will use her education award for graduate studies at Minnesota State University Mankato.

Lakeyta says she just had to serve a second year. "Youth, all youth, are our future. I love the kids I work with, and I just couldn't leave! I came back because too many young people are depressed, bored, and have few ideas about how to create a different life. Many of my teens come from households where no one has graduated from high school, much less college. Even if their parents are behind them, they don't know about resources or the ins and outs of getting through all the hoops. I help build confidence and skills so these young people can see a different vision, and then we work on the practical steps to get there." Lakeyta believes in the power of example and actively recruits successful professionals that

share her students' backgrounds to provide tours of their workplaces and share their stories. "My organization has a community council and many of those leaders respond to this program, dedicating hours to the kids. They challenge them to take responsibility for their lives – the message gets through when it comes from people who have lived these kids' lives." Lakeyta says she also works hard to bring in volunteers from different walks of life so the kids can see that people of all backgrounds care.

"Many of these kids feel looked down upon. It helps them be more open when they get to know people from outside their communities and see that they care. This year, for example, I was lucky to find a retired English teacher who came in and helped the kids with scholarship and college essays. When I see these kids who two years ago were full of attitude or closed down, are now smiling, having fun, joking around, learning together, it feels amazing to know that I have helped to create a space where it is safe for them to be young and positive and full of optimistic plans for their future."

"When I see these kids who two years ago were full of attitude or closed down, are now smiling, having fun, joking around, learning together, it feels amazing to know that I have helped to create a space where it is safe for them to be young and positive and full of optimistic plans for their future."

Evan Steinke

**AmeriCorps Member
Habitat for Humanity**

Evan Steinke admits that when he first applied as an AmeriCorps member with Habitat for Humanity, he wasn't looking for the "life-changing experience" the recruiter assured him would happen. "I have to be honest, as an urban planning major, my agenda was to stand out to future employers. I figured this would look good on my resume." Evan says he knew from day one of training that he had joined an exceptional group of fellow members whose desire to make a difference made a big impression, but it took some time before his practical motivations broadened to include a passion to serve.

"I manage Habitat volunteers – company teams, college students, community groups, who come out to swing a hammer or paint a wall for a day or a week. Making sure everyone is trained and safe and does real work they can point to at the end of the day, that's only the basics. What I really do is serve as a community translator. I try to help people understand the stories behind the Habitat homeowners. I'm someone to whom volunteers can ask their 'real' questions, things that might seem controversial or insensitive. By facilitating those conversations, I help people clear up some of the assumptions that hold

them back from giving more. One of our future homeowners was a 30 year-old East African taxi-driver who was in a coma for six months because of an accident. His wife had to quit college to support the family. He is incredibly smart but the accident left him with a speech impediment. Because I worked alongside him every day, I grew to understand his speech. He really wanted to connect and thank the volunteers who came out and I found myself literally serving as a translator. But more than the words, I became a bridge for volunteers to get to know this man who, despite everything he had gone through as a refugee and with his health, was so grateful and so determined to thank people and wanted to share his story."

"At some point months into the program, I can't tell you the day, but I noticed it right away, I went from saying that I was in this program for my career, to saying that it was an incredible opportunity to give back and that it has absolutely changed for the better who I am and who I will become as a planner. I grew up in a small all-white middle class town. I now understand on an intimate level how critical affordable housing is and can speak first-hand about the stereotypes and fear of poverty, crime, and property-value decline that people associate with it. There is no time in my entire life that I have ever felt so appreciated and connected as when I join my fellow members, community volunteers, Habitat staff, and the future homeowners in a new home dedication ceremony."



*"The emotion, the thank you's
you see in peoples eyes
and on their faces, the feeling
of pride you have for the
mission of this program,
far exceeds anything
you put into it."*

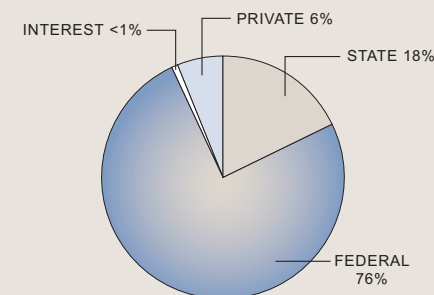
2008 FINANCIAL STATEMENT



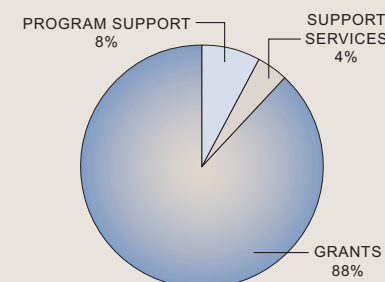
ServeMinnesota Statement of Financial Position August 31, 2008 and 2007

ASSETS	2008	2007
<u>Current Assets:</u>		
Cash	512,012	266,938
Accounts Receivable	644	290
Grants Receivable	1,086,447	1,085,734
Pledges Receivable	105,000	75,000
Prepaid Expenses	3,888	16,664
Total Current Assets	<u>1,707,991</u>	<u>1,444,626</u>
<u>Non-Current Assets:</u>		
Equipment - Net	15,431	7,187
Security Deposit	3,798	3,798
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>1,727,220</u>	<u>1,455,611</u>
 <u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u>		
<u>Current Liabilities:</u>		
Accounts Payable	45,696	74,732
Grants Payable	865,014	1,003,303
Refundable Advance	70,916	—
Total Current Liabilities	<u>981,626</u>	<u>1,078,035</u>
<u>Net Assets:</u>		
Unrestricted:		
Designated	150,000	150,000
Undesignated	126,491	152,576
Total Unrestricted	<u>276,491</u>	<u>302,576</u>
Temporarily Restricted	469,103	75,000
Total Net Assets	<u>745,594</u>	<u>377,576</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	<u>1,727,220</u>	<u>1,455,611</u>

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Leadership

BOARD MEMBERS

Karen Anderson	Pamela Harris	Adam Leonard	Judith Russell
William Arendt	Susan Heegaard	Rep. Carol McFarlane	Alice Seagren
Rep. David Bly	Thomas Horner	Harry Melander	Jackie Sinykin
Keith Dixon	Sam Schuth	Shawn Murphy	Susan Taylor
David Durenberger	Martha Jones Sichko	Robert Rumpza (<i>chair</i>)	Christine Wiegert
Laura Harris	Kate Kelly		

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Bush Foundation	Greater Twin Cities United Way	Opus Corporation	The McKnight Foundation
Cargill, Inc.	H.B. Fuller Company Foundation	Opus Philanthropy Group	The Sheltering Arms Foundation
Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation	Heartland Financial	Otto Bremer Foundation	The Williston Group
Deluxe Corporation Foundation	McNeely Foundation	Target	Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation
Ecolab Foundation	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians	Tennant Foundation	Travelers Foundation
Frey Foundation		The Cargill Foundation	
		The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation	

READING CORPS BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Steve Shank, Capella Education Co. (<i>chair</i>)	Tim Penny, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
John Ellenberger, AMS	Megan Remark, HealthPartners
Pam Harris, Martin & Squires, PA	Arthur Rolnick, Federal Reserve Bank
Tom Horner, Himle-Horner	Bob Rumpza, Rumpza Consulting LLC
Kate Kelly, Minnesota Bank & Trust	Bill Sands, Western Banks
Jan Kruchoski, Larson Allen	Kathy Tunheim, Tunheim Partners
Malcolm McDonald, Space Center	Christine Wiegert, TKDA
Jeanne Mock, Target Corporation	

“As someone familiar with education and the needs of the business community, the Minnesota Reading Corps represents the type of public-private effort we need if we are to ensure a literate workforce for our future. Key factors that interest me as a business leader are that the Reading Corps is data driven, has results to prove that it works, it is highly affordable and it is infinitely replicable.”

Steve Shank,
Chair, Capella Education Corporation



ServeMinnesota
MAKING MINNESOTA BETTER

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available upon request.*