

Dan Cosley- AmeriCorps Summer 2002 St. Mark Community Center

My principle placement with AmeriCorps was at St. Mark Community Center. I designed and implemented a mentoring program that aimed to improve the reading and arithmetic skills of 18 at-risk children grades 1-6. Volunteers mentored the children for two hours on each of the 18 sessions. Each child had unique challenge areas and required special attention. Local schools, which referred the children, provided profiles of their academic standing. This information helped me direct the volunteers in constructing their lesson plans. The program succeeded in raising academic and social awareness in the children.



The mentor program was my main focus during the summer. Each child was matched up to a mentor to work on academic skills.

Perhaps the greatest feature of being an AmeriCorps member is the variety of roles one fills. In addition to the mentoring program, I served at playgrounds, local festivals, and with other programs at St. Mark. Spending time at the playgrounds helped cultivate a peer-like relationship between the children and I. Several children I worked with at playgrounds attended my mentoring program. I was a stable and constant adult in the lives of these children who needed positive role models.



I participated in Family Nights. We made smores after dinner one night. Nearly 30 people attended.



I helped the drama class prepare their props.

AmeriCorps has allowed me to enrich others lives and my own life simultaneously. I learned about the simplicity of helping others. To be present and encouraging, is easy, but can have a great effect. AmeriCorps intensified my commitment to helping others and gave me faith in my ability to do so successfully.