

ALLIANCE YOUTH CONNECTION

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America's Promise

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News and information for
today's young leaders

AMERICA'S PROMISE
ALLIANCE



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THE IMPACT ACADEMY

By Glenn Means



Four years ago, the members of the Youth Partnership Team (YPT) had a simple mission: find a way to cohesively unite youth-driven volunteer movements. The YPT dreamt of hosting a conference of youth leaders, meeting face to face, and uniting them under the Five Promises Framework. Thanks to the generous grant from Peter G. Peterson Foundation, the YPT—now the Impact Network Steering Committee—finally realized this dream.



From May 30 to June 1, over 150 young leaders from across the nation gathered in Washington, DC for the first annual Impact Academy for Community Engagement to discuss the issues that our nation's young people face, and their possible solutions. Attendees heard from Mrs. Alma Powell, EarthEcho International's Philippe Cous-teau and CNBC reporter Rebecca Jarvis, among many others. In addition, they participated in interactive work-shops about the importance of the Five Promises; creative sessions that addressed community problems through music; and brainstorming opportunities to build off attendees' various ideas and enthusiasm. The result was over 150 committed, diverse and experienced young leaders joined America's Promise Alliance's new youth leadership

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ALLIANCE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



By Julia Sewell

NYLC has allowed me to view my community and those around me with a new pair of lenses.

-Parth Shah
NYLC YAC

Twenty-five years ago, the National Youth Leadership Council was born. Its mission of educating and involving young people from around the country was engrained throughout the entire organization. More than two decades later, this mission still rings true, as the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) is now bigger and better than ever. NYLC encourages youth growth through a variety of initiatives, including raising awareness for HIV/AIDS and targeting the achievement gap with service-learning education. Most impressively, NYLC utilizes youth voice in everything that they do. This fresh perspective provides NYLC an edge and legitimacy that reaches and speaks to young people around the world.

My own experience with NYLC started when I was 15, and I am still very much involved. Initially, I attended the NYLC's National Youth Leadership Training, and was later asked to join the Youth Advisory Council, a group of young leaders from across the country that help advise NYLC and provide leadership on various initiatives. I served on the YAC for four years, and now act as a Youth Advisory Council Advisor, and have the opportunity to mentor the amazing national group of young leaders that sit on the YAC.

The role that NYLC plays in the life of the young people that they impact is astonishing. Shatara Tiller, an NYLC Youth Advisory Council Member, describes the role of NYLC in her life: "NYLC has given me courage beyond measure. It has given me emotional strength that holds no limits of power. Because of this I can be the outgoing, intelligent, open-minded and diplomatic person I am today." Sarah Ullmer, the Youth Initiatives Coordinator, has been a part of NYLC for two years. Says Ullmer, "I have the chance to listen to the dreams, hopes and desires of the young people that I work with, lend an ear and encourage and challenge them on their path to pursue their passion, whatever that may be." NYLC continues to offer a plethora of impressive events, conferences, trainings, and perspectives to help young people across the country.



Visit www.nylc.org for more information.



AMERICA'S TICKING DEBT CLOCK

By Niharika Jain

For the past twenty years, America's National Debt Clock has loomed large in New York City's Times Square. But last fall, the 13-digit clock came to a stop when the national debt soared to \$10 trillion, a number so high that the clock ran out of digits.

The dire state of our nation's finances is almost unbelievable – the national debt currently hovers around \$11 trillion, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that it will increase to almost \$19 trillion by the year 2019. According to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, the *real* national debt is \$54.6 trillion, a number that includes not only publicly held debt, but also social security and Medicare.

An organization that aims to raise awareness of key economic challenges in the U.S., the Peterson Foundation advocates for financial responsibility from the national to the individual level. As President Obama said in a June 9 speech, "Paying for what you spend is basic common sense." Nationally, this means fiscal responsibility could include steps like holding off on tax cuts and decreasing social spending, or other methods to balance the country's budget. This is especially difficult now because of the recession, which demands stimulus spending to ameliorate the troubled economy – but there are still ways to tackle the problem.

The Peterson Foundation notes that young people, too, can make a difference by managing their own pocketbooks carefully. By establishing a personal budget, learning to invest money wisely, and getting involved in the campaign for fiscal responsibility, individuals can help address our nation's prodigious financial problem. While the national debt continues to rise, citizens can also demand fiscal accountability from political representatives. The Peterson Foundation suggests many other action steps, which can be found online at www.pgpf.org. Most important, young people must get involved with this problem now, because otherwise it will simply worsen, threatening the stability of the next generation.





UNITED WE SERVE

THE PRESIDENT'S SUMMER SERVICE INITIATIVE

By Zak Newman

Since before his inauguration, President Obama has stressed the importance of service in the United States. The Administration sees community service and involvement as crucial to the recovery of our communities and schools as well as to our environment and economy. In a statement released on June 16th, the president said, "Economic recovery is as much about what you're doing in your communities as what we're doing in Washington – and it's going to take all of us, working together."

The Obama Administration officially rolled out its national service initiative with a summer of service: "United We Serve." The initiative, headed up by First Lady Michelle Obama, began on Monday, June 22nd and continues until September 11th, the nation's new National Day of Service and Remembrance. During these 81 days, regular citizens are encouraged to volunteer, create service projects, and help out to build up their communities.



The crown jewel of the United We Serve campaign is the project's website, www.serve.gov. On the website, Americans can search for volunteer activities in their area and can post their own volunteer opportunities that they want others to get involved in. So, if you are organizing a book drive, you can post your project's information on the website to get other people in your area to help out. While the Administration and the United We Serve campaign are focusing on projects targeted at education, health, energy and the environment, and community renewal, Americans are encouraged to participate in or start any project that addresses a need they see in their community. If you just aren't sure how you want to get involved, the website has great resources like toolkits and sample projects to help you get started.

The United We Serve Campaign is only the start of a focused effort to make service an important part of American life. To get start your own project, assess the needs within your own community; see what resources are there and what resources are missing. Talk to your parents, your friends, and your teachers and do some brainstorming. Then, check out the www.serve.gov website and the United Way's website to see what service projects are already in progress. Once you have an idea for a service project you would like to lead, get a team of friends together, plan your project, and post it on the site!

In kicking off the summer, Mrs. Obama stated, "This new Obama administration doesn't view service as something separate from our national priorities. We have an administration that understands that service is the key to achieving our national priorities." Together, we can be a part of the solution. Let this summer be the summer that redefines America.

SERVE.GOV

KEEP AT IT!

By Kia Albertson-Rogers



So here I am; I just graduated from high school not even four hours ago and I'm already working on an article to share with you! Even though many students are fresh off the grind and ready to party down, others have switched it up and are turning their sights on their next experience - college. For high school graduates, this is a new and exciting time in our lives, and yet the need for service continues! In college there are even more opportunities to participate and lead service activities because there are so many clubs that offer worthwhile projects.

Many people use the college experience as a time to explore what they believe in, to "find themselves" and figure out what they stand for. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "The best way to find your self is to lose yourself in the service of others." One of the best ways to find your self is to volunteer your time and energy in order to help others. College offers the ideal environment for doing just that. Volunteering for service projects is a great way to meet new friends, find people who have similar interests, and help others at the same time.

Some colleges even have unique rewards or scholarships for those who contribute to the surrounding community. Furthermore, college offers a much more enriching service experience through the types of programs and opportunities that the campus offers. If you enjoy teaching, your college probably has a program available that allows you to volunteer at a local school or day care center to help children while at the same time, you get valuable first-hand experience in the classroom.



If you're new to college, it's a great time to branch out with your volunteer work and do a little more than you normally would, to go a little further than your comfort zone. This experience will not only benefit those whom you serve, but it's a great way to learn more about yourself in the process. In addition, you will have opportunities to network with others in the field, which may blossom into an internship or maybe even a business connection in the future.

The quest for service is never over! Although you may want to get a feel for the college experience before you join a specific club or two, these opportunities are abundant and available. Children will always want to be read to; homes will need to be built, and the elderly will appreciate a friendly ear and a warm smile. There are countless people who could use your help, and there is a world that needs saving. Your life will be richer as a result of these many experiences.

ALLIANCE ONLINE

By Andrew Campbell

The Impact Network represents a great step forward for America's Promise Alliance in the way it engages young leaders. Get the easiest way to connect with Impact Network on Facebook; "The Impact Network" and the page caught up with news and about upcoming events, and Alliance and Partner resources. Also check out the general America's Promise Alliance for other Alliance and Partner information and links to Alliance media, data and tools around fighting the dropout crisis and service. Finally, find us online at www.americaspromise.org/youth, where you can find even more in-depth information about the Alliance.



involved! The work is online. The work is on simply search for Impact Network to become a Fan to stay with all the information coming from links to Alliance and Partner resources.

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effort, the Impact Network, By bringing everyone together from all over the country attendees realized that they were fighting similar battles through community efforts, and the potential power of collaboration and cooperation to help in those fights.

As the conference concluded, the Impact Network members committed to a project centered on the Five Promises that would produce a measurable improvement in the lives of the youth and children in their communities. Some reformed projects; some teamed up with new friends to create new ones. All recognized that their collective actions and dedication will make the nation a better place.

The Alliance Youth Connection

Is a monthly publication produced by the Impact Network for America's Promise Steering Committee. We strive to produce content that will both be engaging and informative for the youth leaders and adults who subscribe to the publication. We welcome any comments or advice.

The Impact Network NEEDS YOU!!!

- We want your great service experiences, personal reflections, great communities, and major events to be included in future issues of the Alliance Youth Connection.
- All articles should be under 500 words
- Include pictures if you have them with the email

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