



Imagine
These Lives
Without a
Service Year



At the age of 15,
Germain was expelled
from school.

His service year transformed his life. Now he helps youth just like him find their path.

"As a kid, I would see people shooting at each other from across the street," said Germain, "these are the people that I was looking up to." Raised in a poor neighborhood in Illinois, Germain had a difficult upbringing. After he spent time in juvenile hall, his service year with Youth Conservation Corps transformed his life. It provided him support, the opportunity to make a difference, and perhaps most importantly the belief in himself. Now he's the director of the SHINE Leadership program at Waukegan High School. Everyday, he helps young people just like him understand their potential and life choices.



**Struggling in college,
Kerry needed a
different way forward.**

After two service years working in conservation, Kerry is employed by Virginia's State Parks and completed her degree.


"I wasn't happy at school," said Kerry, "I wasn't quite sure exactly what I wanted to do. But, I knew I didn't want to sit in an office behind a computer all day." After taking a break from college, Kerry wanted to do something that she enjoyed. She always had a passion for Virginia's State Parks that her family visited as a kid. So, she turned to AmeriCorps and the Virginia Conservation Corps. After two years with the program, she is now employed by Virginia's State Parks and has completed her degree in environmental studies.



As a victim of a civil war in Sierra Leone, **Damba came to the U.S. for medical treatment.**

Now she has found her purpose through AmeriCorps.

At age five Damba's, arm was cut off during Sierra Leone's civil war. She arrived in America three years later as a refugee seeking medical treatment. Eventually adopted, she graduated from college and then served two years with AmeriCorps. Her service years deepened her sense of connection to America and her background inspired her to serve others also facing difficult life circumstances. AmeriCorps provided that opportunity. Now, she aspires to open a hospital in Sierra Leone to provide children medical support and decrease the infant mortality rate.



**As a laid off Kentucky
coal miner, **Jamie** had
nowhere to turn.**

Photo credit: Corporation for National & Community Service

Until a local AmeriCorps program helped him transition into a tech job.


"They came and told us they didn't need us no more and sent us home" Jamie said. "I lost everything I had. I had to start over." That new start happened because of Michelle, an AmeriCorps member, who supported him and connected him to employment training. Because of AmeriCorps, Jamie went from a laid-off coal miner to a full-time coder.



**In college, Timothy
made poor decisions
that led to jail time.**

His service year with AmeriCorps gave him a second chance.

Timothy grew up in poverty in North Charleston, South Carolina. He was the first in his family to graduate high school and enroll in college. Sadly, his choices led him to end up in jail for nearly three years. But he turned things around. "AmeriCorps is what helped me overcome my past and prove my responsibility to society," Timothy wrote. "I felt a growing reconnection to the community I once hurt." Now, he's in his third service year with the Sustainability Institute. Everyday, he mentors youth to make good decisions and become role models.



Melanie grew up in
a small suburb, with
people just like her.

**Because of AmeriCorps, she spent
a year working with people of all
backgrounds—people she would have
never otherwise met.**

"It was like a blindfold being taken off my eyes for the first time," said Melanie, "before my service year, I felt like I was living a dream world." Her time with AmeriCorps NCCC exposed Melanie to new people and places, forced her to confront and solve difficult challenges, and for the first time empowered her with the opportunity to impact other people's lives.



For **Kevin**,
transitioning from
the Marine Corps
to civilian life was
far from easy.

AmeriCorps VISTA led him to find meaningful employment. Today, he's working to end veteran homelessness.

"I struggled to find meaningful employment, endured a form of homelessness politely known as "couch-surfing," self-medicated with alcohol and eventually got a DUI," said Kevin, "None of this helped my job prospects." Eight years later, he's turned it around. AmeriCorps VISTA and a nonprofit called Swords to Plowshares gave him an opportunity and a home. Because he was given the opportunity to serve post military, he's now actively involved in the mission to end veteran homelessness.

**As a creative for
corporate clients,
Laura didn't feel
fulfilled.**



She turned to the Peace Corps which ignited her passion for service. Now she helps young people find the same life-changing opportunities.

"I had little knowledge of where I would go or what I would be doing," said Laura, "but I needed a change." Originally, Laura thought she would be working for a New York City ad agency. However, her experience with Peace Corps ignited a passion for social change that she carries with her today and always will. Now in her career, she's able to blend her passion of service and creative work.

Maisha experienced
homelessness growing
up in Philadelphia.



She decided to do a service year, and it became her career inspiration to fight for programs for kids like her.

“What I learned in [my service year]...is that you are an incredible ripple in this big pool that is the world around you. And all you have to do is show up.” At the age of 9, Maisha spent a summer in a homeless shelter in Philadelphia. After her home life stabilized, Maisha and her family went back to serve at that same homeless shelter. That early experience inspired her to do a service year, working to give kids like her an enriched summer camp experience. As a result, working on behalf of those kids like her has become a career as the leader of a national nonprofit.



William, a retired Navy
veteran, had trouble keeping
up with repairs to his home.

AmeriCorps members at Habitat for Humanity helped rebuild his home and gave him the comfort he deserves.

"He would get cold, the house was always very drafty," said William's daughter, Caroline. "Habitat [and AmeriCorps VISTA] did more than we could have ever asked for." William is a proud American who served his country. AmeriCorps VISTA and Habitat for Humanity came to help a veteran. Now, he lives a more comfortable life in his own home.



**Because of your support,
partnership, and leadership,
we don't have to imagine.**



**Together we're building this
movement that transforms
lives, our communities, and
our country.**

**And together,
we have much work to do.**



A BETTER YOU.
A GREATER US.