

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**JVS LOS ANGELES PARTICIPATES IN NATIONWIDE AMERICORPS PROGRAM,
OFFERING JOB LITERACY TRAINING AT AREA NON PROFITS**

53% of Working Adults in Los Angeles Estimated to be Illiterate

(LOS ANGELES) 53% of working adults in Los Angeles are estimated to be illiterate. That's a shocking figure, and one that JVS Los Angeles is addressing through its involvement with the Literacy*AmeriCorps program. Throughout its 80 year history, JVS has always believed that education is vital to job success. On Friday, July 22, JVS held a special recognition ceremony for the dedicated and diverse group of members completing their Literacy*AmeriCorps service.

Sometimes described as the domestic Peace Corps, AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages adults of all ages and backgrounds to meet the nation's critical education, public safety, health and environmental needs. JVS Los Angeles is part of the Literacy*AmeriCorps network, which provides literacy and job counseling services to adults and families in communities throughout the United States.

Elizabeth Rivera, National Program Coordinator for Literacy*AmeriCorps, was the featured speaker at the event. "Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council is so appreciative of the great partner JVS has been this past year and the excellent job they've done. I am especially proud of the amazing service provided by the members who have put their heart and souls into helping others. Giving people the skills they need to compete in the workplace is priceless."

Although literacy training has traditionally been offered through high school and adult education programs, JVS decided to concentrate on providing services at sites that primarily offered work-readiness programs. Fourteen dedicated volunteers who had traveled from throughout the U.S., went to work at L.A.-based non-profits Chrysalis, St. Margaret's Center, the Bresee Foundation, ITEP, ABC Learn, Inc., Wilshire Metro WorkSource Center and of course, JVS' own Marina Del Rey WorkSource Center.

Members in the national program range in age from 23-53. Some do it as a way to give back, while others use it as a form of internship and career experience. They earn a small stipend for their efforts, but the results go far beyond any financial compensation.

Said Jesse Davis, "My time as an AmeriCorps member at the Marina Del Rey WorkSource Center has given me the opportunity to help dislocated and unemployed workers get back into the workforce. Many of them are running out of unemployment insurance benefits. By actively case managing mature workers, I am able to work with the population that I most want to help and provide them with needed individualized attention."

The results from this past year are impressive. JVS' Literacy*AmeriCorps members helped 1,549 clients in job readiness programs, 189 clients in straight literacy programs, and 456 young adults. These clients included ex-offenders, individuals who are homeless and students at-risk of dropping out of school.

Said Sondra Dorsey of her ESL teaching experience at St. Margaret's Center, "I just found out that the three students I have worked with the longest all received awards at school for the first time last week. Two made the Principal's List and one earned "Most Improved." Their parents came after their tutoring session today and thanked me, and the girls gave me huge hugs. That made my day."

Founded in 1931, JVS is Los Angeles' most experienced non-profit, non-sectarian organization dedicated to helping people with career and employment issues. With over 30 programs throughout Southern California targeting a wide array of clients, including the long term unemployed, people with disabilities, refugees and immigrants, and women in transition, JVS is empowering people to become economically self-sufficient, enhancing the quality of life for individuals and families in our community. For more information, visit www.jvsla.org.

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