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For Release: October 23, 2001

AmeriCorps Dedicates Eighth Year to 'Healing and Rebuilding America's Communities'

[Make a Difference Day Activities](#)

New Jersey AmeriCorps members will launch a new season of service on Friday, October 26. More than 400 AmeriCorps members will pledge their commitment to serve New Jersey's communities at a swearing-in ceremony scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in the General Assembly Chamber of the State House. In addition, AmeriCorps members will participate in community service events around the state to celebrate "Make a Difference Day" on or around Saturday, October 27.

This year marks eight years of AmeriCorps service in New Jersey and will be dedicated to the theme of "Healing and Rebuilding America's Communities" in response to the September 11 tragedy. Participating in the swearing-in will be George Bueno, a Jersey City firefighter who was deployed to Ground Zero in the aftermath of the attacks, and AmeriCorps member Ricky Mathews, who participated in relief efforts.

The New Jersey State Commission on National and Community Service will acknowledge Girl Scout Troop #2765 from Hendersonville, Tennessee. The fourth-grade troop, which is sending three representatives to the ceremony, collected and contributed 400 large, stuffed animals for the children who lost a parent or parents at the World Trade Center. New Jersey AmeriCorps members will also be distributing the stuffed animals to children through the schools.

"Make a Difference Day" is an annual national event that will involve more than 2 million participants in community service activities. (A list highlighting New Jersey service activities and sites is attached).

Donald Bowling, chairman of the New Jersey State Commission on National and Community Service, said, "This is a day to recognize the contributions that AmeriCorps members make in communities throughout New Jersey. Now, more than ever, it is important to rededicate ourselves to the spirit of service."

AmeriCorps participants perform one year of community-based service on projects such as removing debris from waterways, conducting environmental clean-ups, working with families and senior citizens to combat poverty and homelessness, mentoring juvenile offenders, increasing literacy skills and providing safe havens for children to learn and play in after school programs. In return, they receive a modest living allowance of \$9,300 and an education award of \$4,725 to help pay for college or pay back student loans.

For more information on "Make a Difference Day" or AmeriCorps, please contact Rowena Madden or Anthony Bland at 609-633-9627.

NOTE: Reporters and photographers are invited and encouraged to attend the events described in the attached list.