PUBLIC ALLIES
Everyone Leads

Nothing About Us, Without Us, Is For Us:

Building a Framework for Inclusive National Service

Session 2: Analyzing **patterns in our individual work practices** and **using critical consciousness** to build an AmeriCorps that **works in the interest of everyone**

AMERICA'S SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Who's in the Room?

Please answer in one sentence in the chat box

- Where are you located?
- What's your program?
- Why are you here?
- POLL: Were you in session 1?

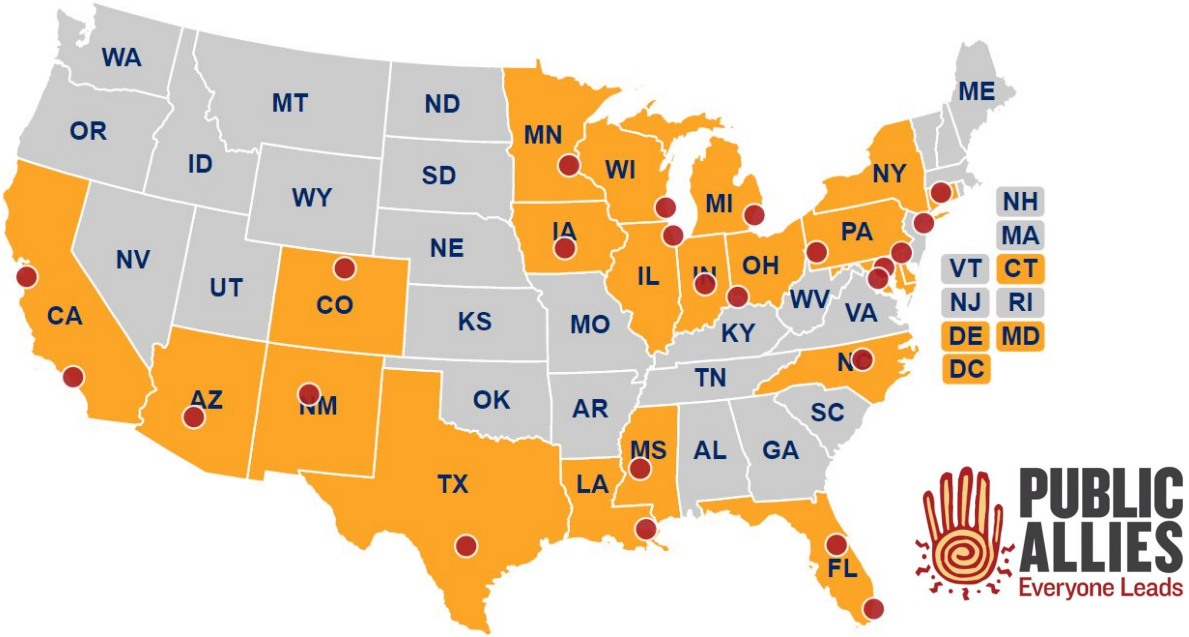
Example: *New Orleans; Public Allies; improve practices of inclusion in our member host sites*

Body Check-In

Nothing About Us Without Us Is For Us

Public Allies' mission is to build a just and equitable society and diverse leadership to sustain it.

Since 1992, we've advanced 8,000 diverse young adults in 25 cities via our AmeriCorps Apprenticeship.



At a Glance

Diversity & Inclusion

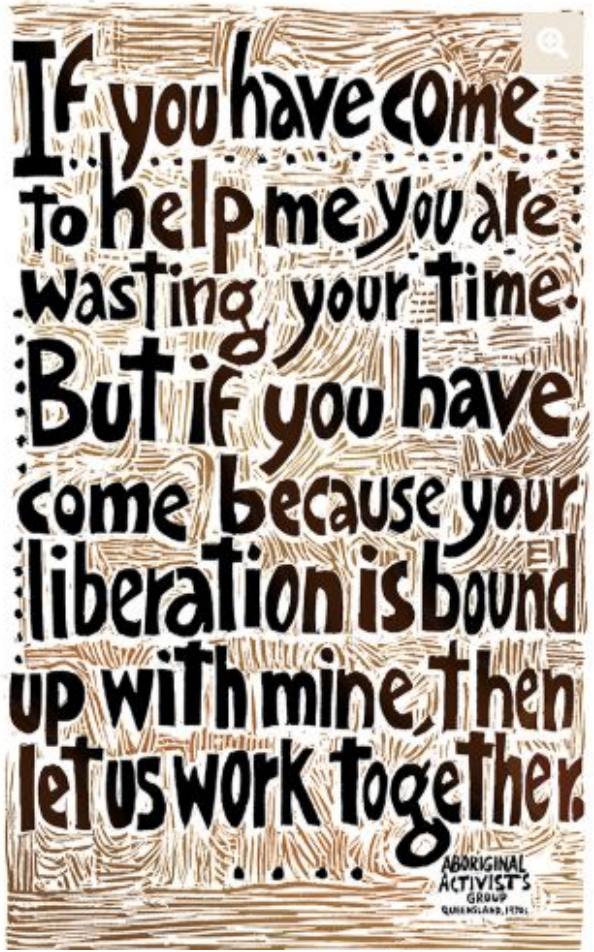
Integrity

Focus on Assets

Collaboration

Continuous Learning

Innovation


If you have come
to help me you are
wasting your time.
But if you have
come because your
liberation is bound
up with mine, then
let us work together.
ABORIGINAL
ACTIVIST'S
GROUP

What we are going to cover

- ★ Brief Review of Anti-Oppression Framework
- ★ Raising Critical Consciousness to Build an AmeriCorps for Everyone
- ★ Recruitment as an “Iceberg” Event
- ★ Dismantling the Recruitment Iceberg
- ★ Next Steps/Action Commitments

Review: Anti-Oppression Framework

How Oppression is Maintained

- Individual level
- Institutional level
- Cultural level

Anti-Oppression Framework:

1. Oppression is pervasive and **hurts us all though NOT in the same ways**. Confronting oppression will benefit everyone.
2. Adultism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and every other form of oppression is **both** a system of oppression **and** a system of advantage.
3. All prejudice was taught to us, and we resisted this teaching. If we choose to, we can unlearn it.
4. Fixing blame helps no one; taking responsibility helps everyone.

Anti-Oppression Framework:

5. None of us “invented” oppression; it is a legacy we inherited. Thought its creation is not our fault, we must now accept responsibility for our role in its continued existence.
6. All prejudices and oppressions are interwoven and entangled.
7. “There is no hierarchy of oppression.” Trying to rank one group’s pain over another distracts us and prevents us from dismantling any and all oppression.
8. All of us have had the experience as a target of oppression, as well as the experience of privilege.

Anti-Oppression Framework:

9. There is no such thing as “passive anti-oppression.” We are either actively working against oppression or we are colluding with it, allowing it to continue in our name.
10. Individuals, organizations and communities can and do grow and change.
11. Our commitment to eliminating all forms of injustice must be a lifelong one.
12. Confronting social injustice is painful and joyful.

Using Critical Consciousness to build An AmeriCorps for Everyone

What is critical consciousness?

- Paulo Freire
- The ability to intervene in reality in order to change it

Where to begin?

1. Community members coming together to name their world by reflecting on their conditions

2. Imagining a better world

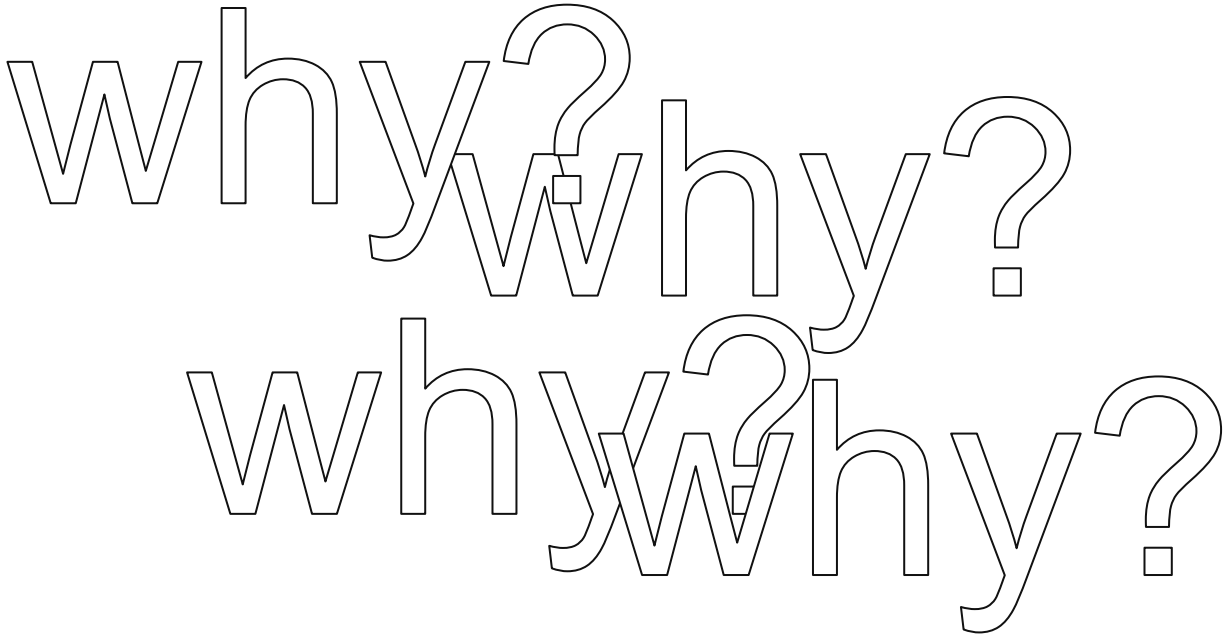
3. Taking action to create it

What are the conditions of your communities?

What are the systems that are at work that drive inequity and oppression?

Where is your program's work situated?

Why aren’t we more equitable?



What does it mean for AC* to be equitable?

AmeriCorps Mission (fom the website):

To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

AmeriCorps Guiding Principles:

- Put local communities need first
- Strengthen the public-private partnerships that underpin all of our programs.
- Use our programs to build stronger, more efficient, and more sustainable community networks, capable of mobilizing volunteers to address local needs, including disaster preparedness and response.
- Measure and continually improve our programs' benefits to service beneficiaries, participants, community organizations, and our national culture of service.

What does it mean for AC* to be inclusive?

Guiding Principles (con't)

- Build collaborations across our programs and with other federal programs.
- Help rural and economically-distressed communities obtain access to public and private resources.
- Support diverse organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations, minority colleges, and disability organizations.
- Implement service learning to enrich service experiences and stimulate life-long civic engagement.
- Support continued civic engagement, leadership, and public service careers for our programs' participants and community volunteers.
- Exhibit excellence in management and customer service.

What world are you imagining?

What vision are you working towards?

Is this vision shared by your community? How do you know?

How can you get clear about what you are working towards?

How is this vision collectively built, with the ones who are most impacted leading the way?

What we hold in equity work...

- Cannot separate our Americorps programs from the communities they are situated in, the systems of oppression at work and the opportunities that move towards liberation

What we hold in equity work...

- There is no magic bullet to this work
  - It is complex
  - It is nuanced
  - Mistakes have been made and will be made
  - It is a part of a legacy that existed before you and will continue after you
    - get clear about your contribution

What we hold in equity work...

Not equating representation/numbers of “diverse” participants with meaningful engagement.

Meaningful engagement works to **transform oppressive systems** we are all in and **build power** for those most impacted by those systems.

What we hold in equity work...

Centering your strategy solely on enrolling diverse members perpetuates inequity.

i.e. Bringing black, brown, indigenous, people of color into organizations and programs that are not actively working to dismantle the ways white supremacy shows up in their organization and community is toxic, creates harm, and erodes trust.

Remember...

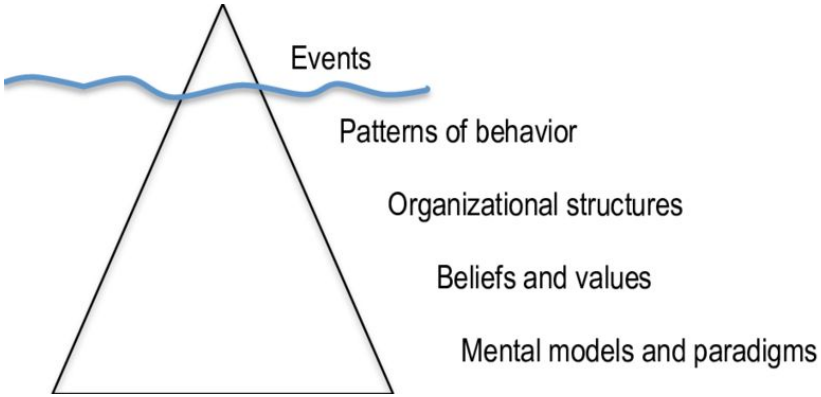
"Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

- Not culture: What we **claim** to believe and how we aspire to act
- Culture: What our habits/actions **demonstrate** we believe
- What are the beliefs your organization/program operates from? Your partners?

Recruitment as an Iceberg Event

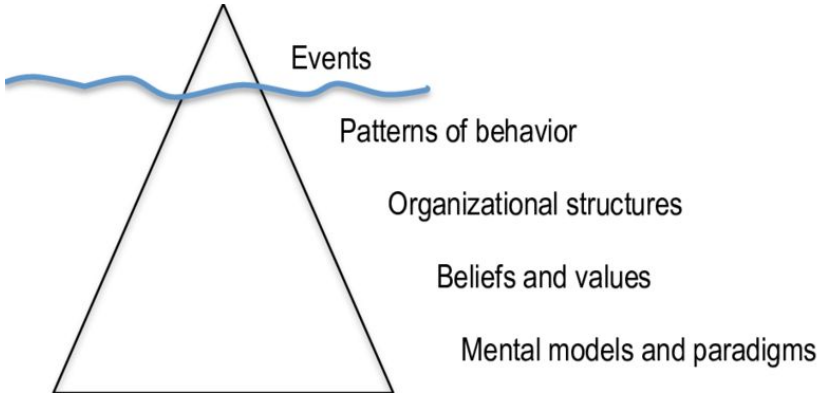
Recruitment as an Iceberg: Event

- *Want to recruit more Members of color or increase diversity in my program*



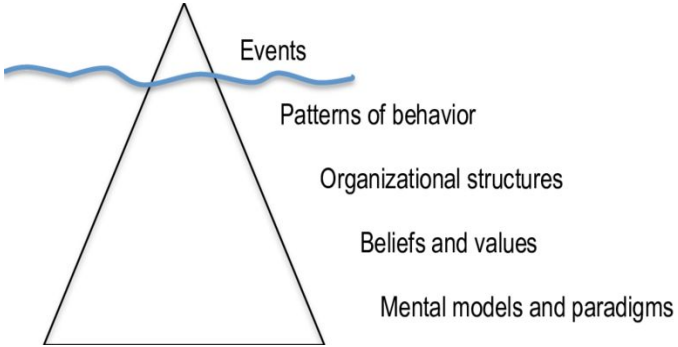
Recruitment as an Iceberg: Patterns of Behavior

- Using same recruitment strategies and expecting a different result
- Transactional approach



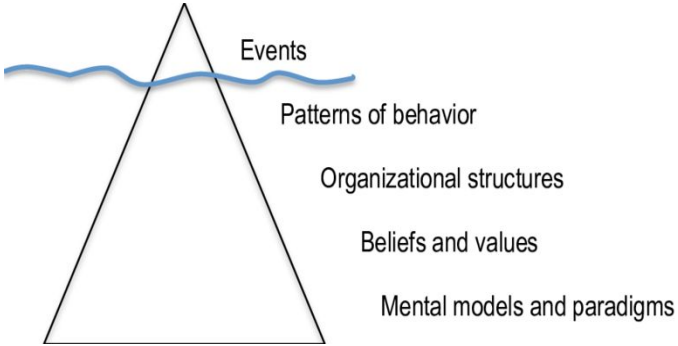
Recruitment as an Iceberg: Organizational Structure

- Not having adequate staff resources
- Staff diversity and staff culture
- Lack of investment in building long-term community relationships
- Urgency of recruitment cycle
- AmeriCorps Stipend



Recruitment as an Iceberg: Beliefs and Values

- *We have good intentions -- we are trying to do the right thing*
- *The problem is bigger than us*
- *We haven't been able to find the right candidates*
- *Our partners/host sites have specific expectations that we have to meet*

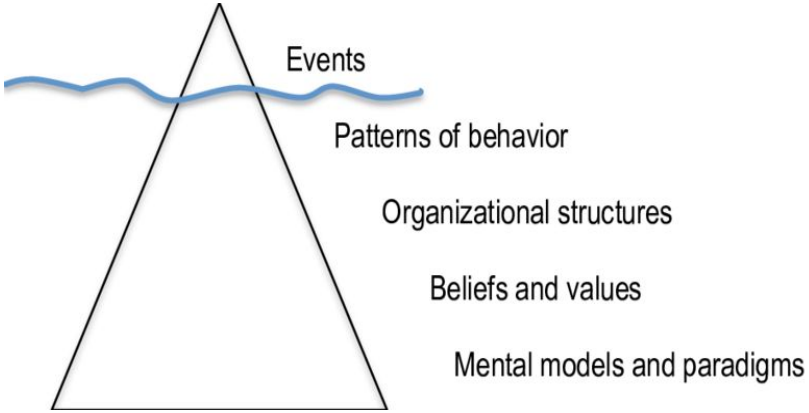


Recruitment as an Iceberg: Mental Models & Paradigms

- National service is a way for those with privilege to understand poverty
- National service is a secular version of a missionary program
- Service is “good” therefore no systemic analysis is necessary or helpful
- Can’t upset the status quo -- will put funding at risk

Pause and Reflect

- Anything to add?
- Which of these shows up for you/in your org?



Patterns of White Supremacy Culture

- **Urgency**
- Perfectionism
- **Quantity over quality**
- Only one right way
- Fear/avoidance of open conflict
- Defensiveness
- **Power hoarding**
- **Paternalism**
- **Either/or thinking**
- Individualism
- "I'm the only one"
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort
- Worship of the written word

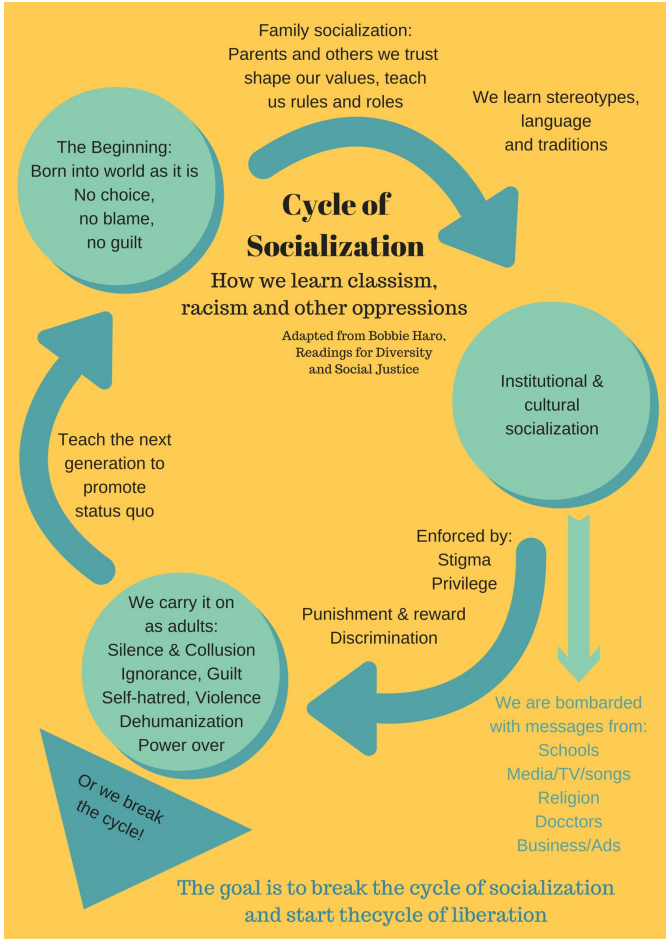
www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/whitesupcul13.pdf

Dismantling the Recruitment Iceberg

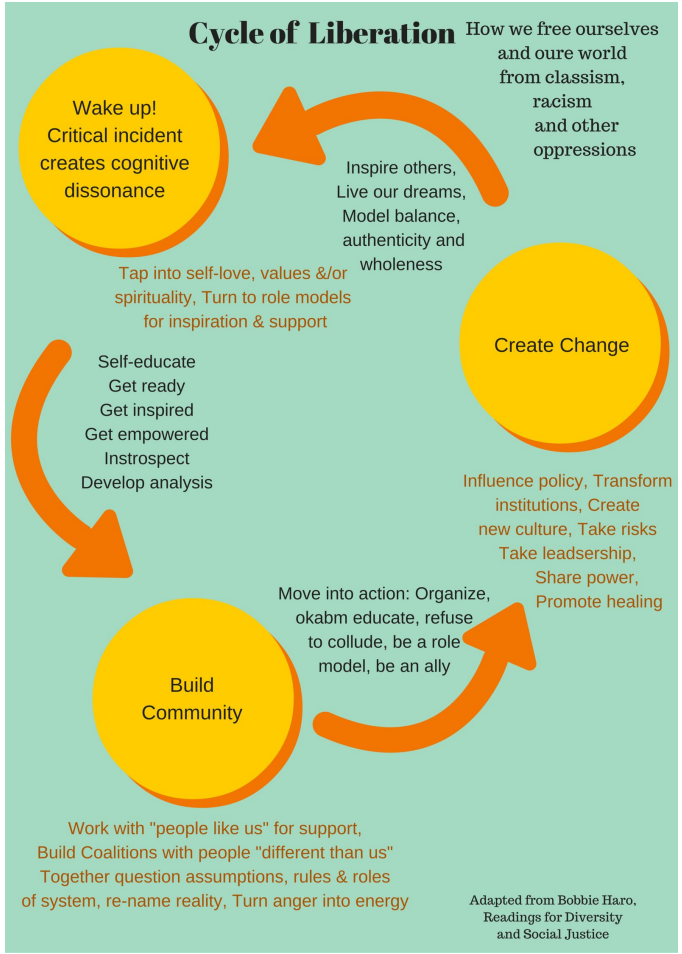
How do we shift?

- Starting with self
- Deepening awareness of the cycle of socialization and how that's maintaining the iceberg
- Deepening awareness of the cycle of liberation
- Increasing our capacity to hold the dissonance, in ourselves and our work
- Increase our capacity to recognize our own power, and use it

If this builds and maintains the iceberg…



How do we dismantle it?



Cycle of Liberation: Recruitment

- Waking up
  - Recognize that your organizational systems are creating the result they are designed to create

Cycle of Liberation: Recruitment

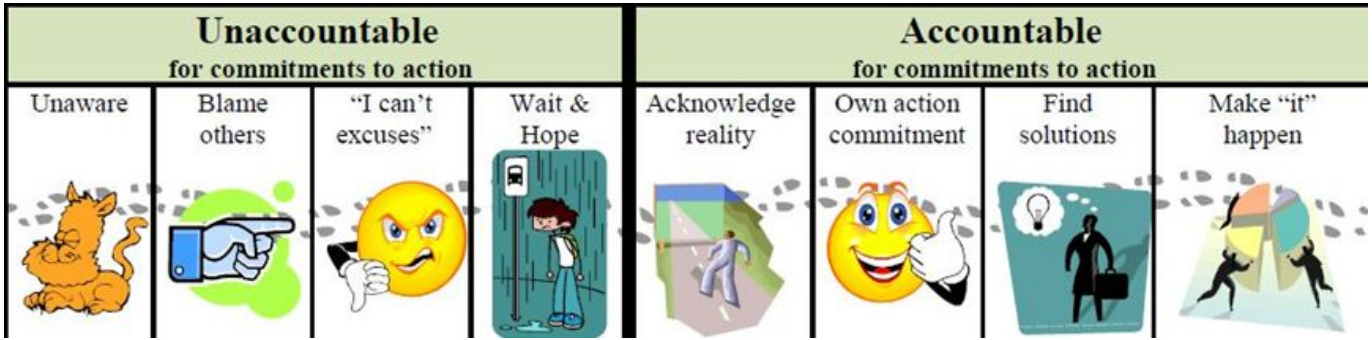
- Build community
  - Meaningful relationships built with trust and attention to repairing harm

Cycle of Liberation: Recruitment

- Create change
  - Deep as opposed to wide
  - Focusing on systems level change

Reflection/Discussion

Who’s accountable?



Next Steps

“Do you already know that your existence--who and how you are--is in and of itself a contribution to the people and place around you? Not after or because you do some particular thing, but simply the miracle of your life. And that the people around you, and the place(s), have contributions as well? Do you understand that your quality of life and your survival are tied to how authentic and generous the connections are between you and the people and place you live with and in?

Are you actively practicing generosity and vulnerability in order to make the connections between you and others clear, open, available, durable? Generosity here means giving of what you have without strings or expectations attached. Vulnerability means showing your needs.”

— adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds

What’s the next action you are committed to towards building an AmeriCorps that works for everyone?

Thank you!

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