

SCSU celebrates launch of St. Cloud AmeriCorps with partners

Friday, September 19, 2003

ST. CLOUD, Minn. -- Representatives from St. Cloud State University, partnering non-profit organizations, and area communities will gather on Wednesday, Sept. 24, to celebrate the start of a new AmeriCorps program based at the university. AmeriCorps, a national service program often described as the domestic Peace Corps, provides an opportunity for adults of all ages and from any background to help meet pressing local needs.



The program is funded by a \$300,000 AmeriCorps grant — one of only a few awarded in Minnesota — which may be renewed annually for three years. Partners in the program include: SCSU, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Minnesota, United Way of Central Minnesota, the City of St. Cloud RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program), Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud, Boys & Girls Club of Central Minnesota, Stearns County Emergency Services, Tri-County Action Program, and the American Red Cross Central Minnesota.

Twenty applicants will be chosen to become fulltime AmeriCorps members. They will be placed with the AmeriCorps partners to work on projects related to youth mentoring, volunteerism/service-learning, and disaster preparedness.

“Service in AmeriCorps calls for commitment and motivation. It is an opportunity to get things done for America,” says Jennifer Rausch, AmeriCorps coordinator. “This is our world and our chance to make it better.”

AmeriCorps was established in 1993 to engage Americans — especially young adults — in volunteer service for the benefit of local communities. To date, there have been more than 100,000 members who have given a year of service to their country.

In exchange for a full term of service, usually 10-12 months, AmeriCorps members can earn a \$4,725 education award to help pay for college or training, or to pay back student loans. AmeriCorps members will serve approximately 38 hours a week and receive health coverage, loan deferment, and a living allowance of \$9,900 while they’re in the program.

Applicants must be at least 17 years old and U.S. citizens, nationals, or