Dear Student,

Congratulations on being invited to apply to MCC’s nationally recognized service scholarship program – The Bonner AmeriCorps Program (Bonner Program). What is the Bonner Program? It is your opportunity to **Serve, Learn and Earn**. Housed at the Democracy House Center for Community Engagement, Bonner focuses on engaging students in meaningful community service and leadership activities. Our Bonner program is part of a national network established by the Bonner Foundation located in Princeton, NJ and includes more than eighty colleges and universities across the country.

Here at MCC we call the Bonner Program our domestic ‘Peace Corps’. Each year, we recruit a diverse team of students and connect them with service opportunities in the local community. On a typical day you could find a student running an after-school program at a public housing complex, helping feed hungry residents at a soup kitchen, mentoring high school students on college readiness, or planting a community garden. In other words, they are doing their part to help others—**serving** their community.

You will also **learn** a great deal by being a part of the Corps. Students are given real power to help shape the program at each local site, allowing them to develop their critical thinking and organizational skills. They receive weekly training and work with a diverse group of students, staff and community agencies, providing the opportunity to sharpen their communication and team-building abilities. All Bonner students are also invited to participate in the College’s newest training program – The MCC Student Leadership Collaborative.

This is also a chance to **earn**. Similar to the Peace Corps, we put together a package of incentives and rewards. Serving as their Work Study placement, participants are required to dedicate approximately 15 hours per week (for a total of 300+ hours over the academic year) to their community service and training. Once completing the 300 hours, members are eligible for an additional Educational Award of $1,175. This system makes it easier for students to serve the community without neglecting some of their current or future expenses. Students interested in a smaller commitment are also encouraged to volunteer through the Center’s community service referral system and gain essential service, academic and career experience.

If you are interested in applying, currently enrolled students are asked to please complete the enclosed application and recommendation forms **as soon as possible**. You may drop it off in person (in a sealed envelope) at the Democracy House mailbox at 137 Raritan Hall or email it to Democracyhouse@middlesexcc.edu. Selected candidates will be contacted for an interview to take place beginning in April. Orientation and enrollment will take place in late August and Bonners will hopefully begin service at their community sites by September 15th.

Thank you and good luck in the upcoming semester.

Sincerely,

The Democracy House Staff
Bonner Program Details (2015-2016)

Program Benefits

- Bonner Service Site serves as your Federal Work-Study placement
- AmeriCorps Education Award (1 Year Term/300 Hours) - $1,175 award
- Membership in a nationally recognized program
- Free attendance at local and national conferences
- Extensive training in leadership, program management, professional skills, and social issues
- Networking opportunities

Requirements

- Eligible for off-campus Work-Study placement awarded through the MCC Office of Financial Aid
- 1-academic year commitment (Fall15/Sep - Spring16/May)
- Serve approximately 15 hours/week with a community partner (*see specific hours below)
- Attend all Bonner meetings (1.5 hours/week) (*see specific time below)
- Passion for community involvement, social justice, and political issues
- Log hours on two different hour tracking systems – (paper and online)

Weekly Service Hours

Monday-Friday 3:00-6:00 pm (12 hrs. /wk.)

Weekly All-Corps

Meeting/Training Mondays 11:00-12:20 (College Hour)

MCC Student Leadership Collaborative

1 Friday/per month, 1:00-4:00 pm for Spring semester 2016

Orientations and Conferences

Orientation (Aug), MLK Service Day (Jan), and
Bonner Summer Leadership Institute (3 day conference in early June)

Service Placements

This year Bonners will be focusing on the issues of - Mentorship, College Access and Hunger. Students will do their weekly service with three community partners:

- After-School Program (Grades 3-6) – **Puerto Rican Action Board**, New Brunswick, NJ
- Mentoring/College-Access After-School Program (Grades 9-12) - **EMPOWER**, New Brunswick, NJ
- Soup Kitchen - **Elijah’s Promise**, New Brunswick, NJ and Better World Café, Highland Park, NJ

Students can also do additional hours or special projects with community partners such as Junior Achievement NJ, The Middlesex County Center for Empowerment, New Brunswick Community Food Alliance, Community Gardens, Women Aware and a number of nonprofits throughout Middlesex County.

Eligibility/Funding Questions

To apply to the MCC Bonner Program, you must be eligible for Financial Aid and Federal Work Study. Bonner Service stipends are paid through for a Work Study placement. Please visit the Office of Financial Aid (http://www2.middlesexgcc.edu/financial-aid.html) for more information or to find out if you qualify for work-study money.

Partners

The program is a partnership with the Bonner Foundation, the Democracy House Center for Community Engagement, and the Office of Financial Aid/Federal Work Study. The AmeriCorps Program is a federally funded service program offered through the Corporation for National and Community Service.
NOTE: 1. Please read and confirm that you can undertake the Program requirements (previous page) before filling out the application.
2. You must be eligible for Work Study/Financial Aid to apply for this program.

I. BASIC INFORMATION
Name: _______________________________ Student Identification Number:_______________________

Home Address:_______________________________________________________________________________

Home Telephone: ___________________ Cell Phone: ________________ Email Address: ___________________

Major: _________________________________ Number of classes/credits Fall 2014: ______________

Current MCC GPA (High school for incoming students): ______ Expected year of MCC Graduation: ________

Are you eligible for work study/financial aid? _____ *If you are not sure whether you are eligible, please contact the Financial Aid office at x3520

Do you have available transportation? __________ (not required)

Will you be able to complete at least 3 days of service during the following times 3:00 – 6:00 pm, Mon – Fri? ______

Will you be able to attend the weekly training meetings on Mondays 11:00 am – 12:20 pm (MCC College Hour)? ______

Do you have other employment or any other major commitments planned for the upcoming year? ______

II. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION- Please provide TWO recommendations (use attached forms at end) from a former teacher, community member, employer, advisor, guidance counselor, etc. Recommendations should be confidential, filled out and sent by the recommender. These are also due Monday, August 11th.

III. Short Essay Questions
Please respond as thoughtfully and as fully as you feel necessary to the following questions. They are designed to give you an opportunity to relate the experiences that qualify you to be a Bonner Program member. Responses should be typed and no more than 150 words each.

1. What issue/s in the world today are you most passionate about? Put another way, when you watch or read the news or simply live your life, what issue grabs your heart and head and won't let go? Why?

2. Please describe a past or current volunteer experience and what you learned through your participation. If you have not volunteered or performed service in the past, please explain service that you would like to do in future and what you hope to gain from it?
The individual named below has indicated that you have stated your willingness to serve as a reference for his or her application to the Bonner AmeriCorps Program. This is a competitive Federal AmeriCorps program that looks for highly committed students to perform approximately 300 hours of community service with a local community agency. We are seeking students with the necessary academic, social skills, and high level of commitment to perform effectively as agents of change in the community. Your insight will be invaluable to our decisions and greatly appreciated. **Please fax or email completed form by Monday, March 23, 2015 to (732) 603-7049 or democracyhouse@middlesexcc.edu.**

Name of Applicant: ________________________________
Name of Recommender: ____________________________ Position/Relationship: _____________________________
E-mail: ________________________________ Phone: ________________ Fax: __________________

Please answer the questions below, using the scale provided (1 being lowest; 5 being highest).
5 = Excellent, top 5%; 4 = Very good, top 20%; 3 = Good to average top 50%;
2 = Average to poor, bottom 50%; 1 = Very poor, bottom 20%

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Would you recommend this student for the program? Yes__________ No __________

Please explain and provide any relevant comments below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*This recommendation will be held in strict confidence.*

1 Adapted with permission from Rutgers University Bonner Program.
Middlesex County College Bonner AmeriCorps Program

Recommendation Form due Monday, March 23, 2015

The individual named below has indicated that you have stated your willingness to serve as a reference for his or her application to the Bonner AmeriCorps Program. This is a competitive Federal AmeriCorps program that looks for highly committed students to perform approximately 300 hours of community service with a local community agency. We are seeking students with the necessary academic, social skills, and high level of commitment to perform effectively as agents of change in the community. Your insight will be invaluable to our decisions and greatly appreciated. Please fax or email completed form by Monday, March 23, 2015 to (732) 603-7049 or democracyhouse@middlesexcc.edu.

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