

January 14, 2002

Ms. Marsha Meeks Kelly
Executive Director
Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service
3825 Ridgewood Road, Suite 601
Jackson, Mississippi 39211

Dear Ms. Kelly:

I am pleased to offer my support to the Mississippi Center for Community and Civic Engagement's Campus Link AmeriCorps program application. The program will provide services to middle school students – an area of great need in Mississippi. The goals set forth by this proposed initiative include an after-school mentoring program designed to increase academic efficacy, build awareness of college opportunities, and reduce risky behaviors among middle school students.

The proposed initiative reflects a focus on several of the priorities identified in *Building Opportunity in Mississippi Through Higher Education*, a forward-looking and goal-oriented agenda for all of our colleges and universities. This agenda was developed by a broad-based 45-member steering committee of Mississippians that I had the opportunity to co-chair. The initiative addresses the goals of bolstering the quality of teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools, increasing college graduation rates, and raising the educational aspirations of citizens.

The strategies outlined by the Center for Community and Civic Engagement will provide a beneficial opportunity for the citizens of Mississippi. The strategies provide much needed academic and social support to low income and under-achieving students, engage citizens in community-building activities, and provide children and their families with information about post-secondary academic opportunities.

I believe that the Mississippi Center for Community and Civic Engagement's proposal is worthy of your resources. I am pleased to offer support for this project. Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Very truly yours,

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RM:klr