

Angela Scott Abdur-Rasheed

From: Angela Scott Abdur-Rasheed
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2018 2:12 PM
To: Angela Scott Abdur-Rasheed
Subject: FW: Holding ourselves responsible for getting better

From: Ted Miller [mailto:cnscs@delivery.nationalservice.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 15, 2016 11:03 AM
To: Joan Witherspoon-Norris <joanwn@ywcabham.org>
Subject: Holding ourselves responsible for getting better

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National Service News

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This week, the President invited law enforcement, community leaders, parents, and young people to a White House convening on strengthening public trust. He also held a town hall last night that you can catch on the [White House's website](#).

In his opening remarks at the White House convening, the President said something that's especially applicable to the role of national service programs in breaking down barriers and focusing on a common purpose:

"[W]hat we can do is to set up the kinds of respectful conversations that we've had here -- not just in Washington, but around the country -- so that we institutionalize a process of continually getting better, and holding ourselves accountable, and holding ourselves responsible for getting better."

In that spirit, see below examples of citizens coming together to tackle challenges and engage communities in making things better.



Ted Miller
Chief of External Affairs
Corporation for National and Community Service



“...And To Me, That's Golden.” This month is Disability Inclusion Month here at CNCS, where we will focus on how national service and the Social Innovation Fund strive to engage all people as community assets and resources regardless of their disabilities. We will feature stories of individuals who have proven that their disability hasn't stopped their desire to serve and organizations who have effectively engaged people with disabilities as both volunteers and employees. One of our favorite stories so far is this [video of George Davis](#), an AmeriCorps member serving with Habitat for Humanity as a construction leader who has a fantastic story to tell. You can also discover some of the ways we can all strive to make service an option for all Americans with our list of [25 ways to improve inclusion in service](#).

National Service in the News

AmeriCorps

*Kenyata featured in National Service.
Stepping Outside of Comfort Zones Brings Leadership opportunities for
AmeriCorps Members*

The Birmingham Times (AL), July 7, 2016

Kenyata Tate is not afraid to work. A single mother of three, Tate, 33, has been employed, as well as going to school, since she was 16 years old. A year ago, she decided to make a big leap and become an AmeriCorps member. Her gamble paid off, and it's been a blessing in her working life, as well as in the life of her own children. Previously working as a payment plan representative with State Farm Insurance, Tate realized she wasn't happy with the position even though it paid the bills.

AmeriCorps NCCC

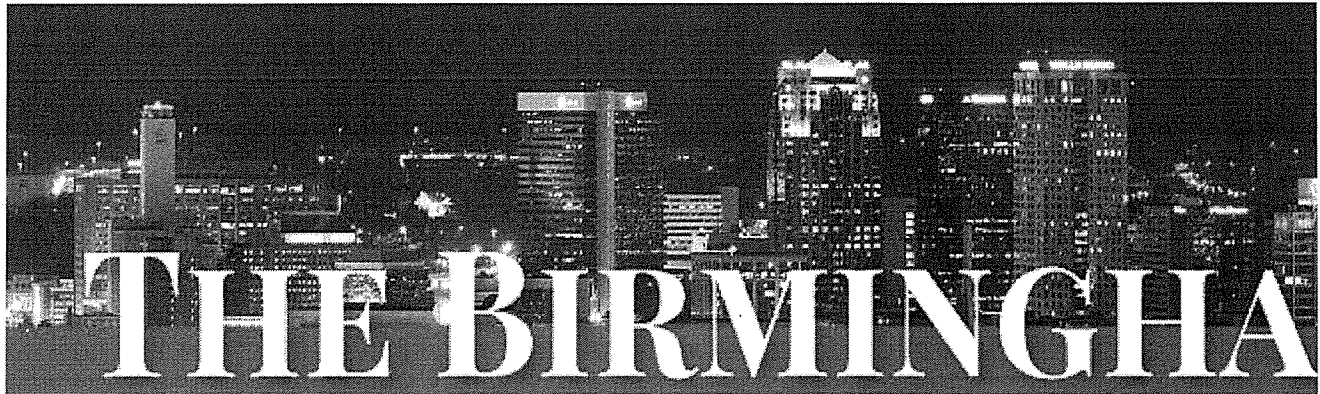
Thank the Trail Crew — Hike a Trail

The Globe Gazette (IA), July 2, 2016

It might be the kind of work you find featured on the reality show “Dirty Jobs.” The days are long and filled with physical labor — hauling heavy timbers, large rocks and loads of gravel, clearing brush and digging dirt. At the end of the day, your clothes are sweat-soaked and your skin is blistered, scratched and mosquito-bit. There's a lot of work that goes into developing and maintaining Iowa's state park trails, from planning and preparing materials in the off-season to the hard labor of the summer season. In most

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KENYATA TATE: STEPPING OUTSIDE OF COMFORT ZONE BRINGS LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICORPS MEMBER


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By Kathryn Sesser-Dorné

For The Birmingham Times



Kenyata Tate is seen in the Woodlawn Family Resource Center kitchen where staff was preparing for a recent "Let's Cook!" even for neighborhood families. (Kathryn Sesser-Dorné, for The Birmingham Times)

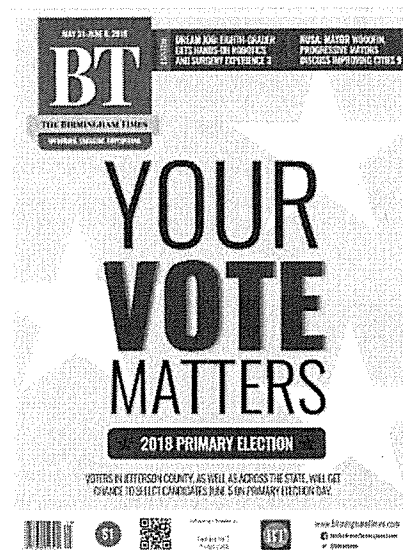
Kenyata Tate is not afraid to work.

A single mother of three, Tate, 33, has been employed, as well as going to school, since she was 16 years old. A year ago, she decided to make a big leap and become an AmeriCorps member. Her gamble paid off, and it's been a blessing in her working life, as well as in the life of her own children.

Previously working as a payment plan representative with State Farm Insurance, Tate realized she wasn't happy with the position even though it paid the bills. She decided to take a chance with AmeriCorps, even though it meant she would bring in less money for her family of four.

"I feel like I took a step outside of what I was doing when I was making money, but I wasn't happy. I told myself, 'Let me do

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something that I want to do,” she said. “And even though it’s a sacrifice money-wise, it’s paid off. For me, I keep getting confirmation I did the right thing.”

‘Stepping out’

Tate and her co-worker Jennifer Thomas at the Woodlawn YWCA were recently chosen as two of the four finalists for AmeriCorps Member of the Year. “So I feel like my work is paying off. It’s not like I was trying to be a shining star, but it was worth me stepping out.”

No stranger to the struggle faced by those she helps in Woodlawn, Tate has been working nearly half of her young life.

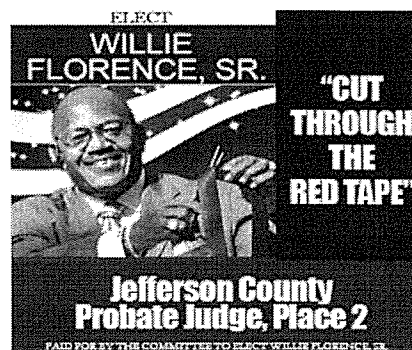
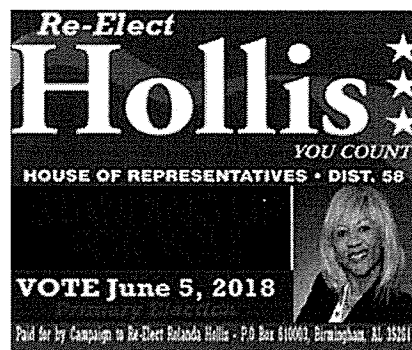
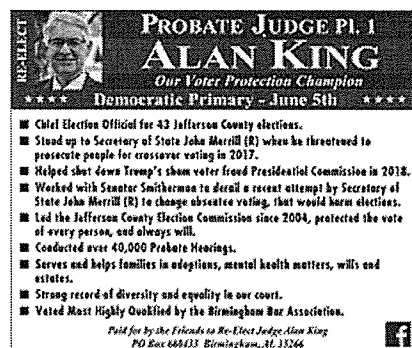
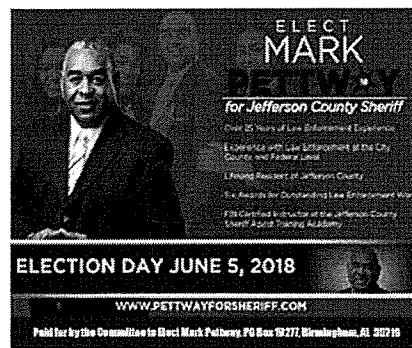
“When I was 16, I started working in fast food, which I did for five years,” she said. During this time, Tate bought a house, and quickly realized that she couldn’t pay a mortgage while working for minimum wage. She had her second daughter by then, and realized she needed a “good job” and took a position with Wells Fargo working in their call center as a customer service representative. When that job began to focus more on sales, she knew it wasn’t the place for her.

Her next plan was school, so Tate began a two-year pharmacy tech program. “I didn’t make the best decision on what I wanted to do when I went back, so that was a waste of money and time. Although I did finish with an A average, it just didn’t pan out for me. When I finished, I didn’t feel like I was prepared to go out into the field.”

Instead of feeling discouraged, she just kept pushing. It’s what she does best.

She started a work study at Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, but with that being minimum wage, she turned to St. Vincent’s where she began to work in the parking deck, which led to a position as a secretary.

“I only left St. Vincent’s because I worked seven on, seven off, which took me away from my kids. My week I had to work, I had to take them, all their clothes and food over to their auntie’s house. And they told me they were tired of having to stay over there so much, so I changed jobs to better accommodate them.”





Kenyata Tate, a single mother of three, has been working nearly half of her life to help better provide for her children. Keyonté Williams, 12, Kamiya Williams, 11, Kasiya Williams, 9, often participate in programs at the Woodlawn Family Resource Center while their mother is working. (Kathryn Sesser-Dorné, for The Birmingham Times)

Greater Calling

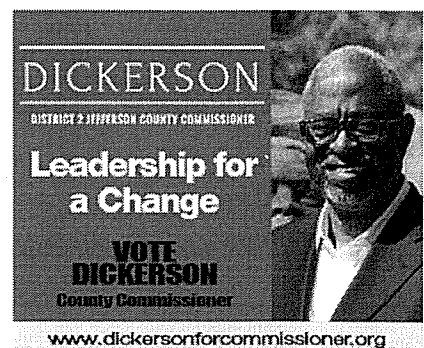
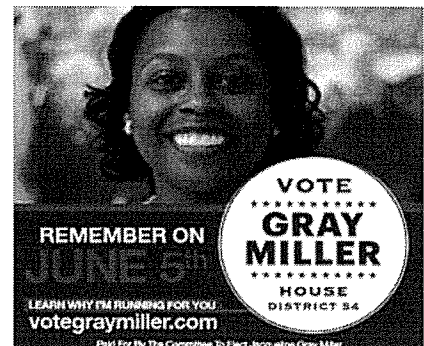
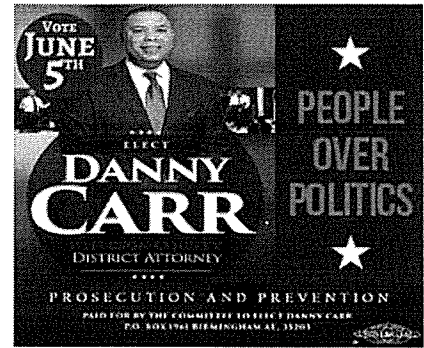
That is when she moved to State Farm, where she would later realize her greater calling.

"Three years ago, we happened to discover FRC (Woodlawn's Family Resource Center). My daughters were in Girls on the Run, which met here, so I talked with Jennifer (Thomas) about AmeriCorps and what it had to offer.

"I think I am in the place that I am supposed to be. I'm here. I'm in school and working toward getting my degree in social work. It's a challenge, trying to do this and school," she added. She plans to transfer to UAB in the fall, and her projected graduation will be the summer of 2018. To top it off, Tate is also in the Army Reserves, trying to get her PT together so she can earn a promotion.

"I'm wearing a million different hats right now," she said.

Tate had her children in the span of three years. Her youngest was just five months old when their father passed away, leaving her a



single mother at just 24. "It's been a challenge, just trying to work through things, trying to find a balance after realizing for the most part, it's just me."

She is fortunate enough to have help from her family, an aunt or uncle helps some, and her mother is able to pitch in help when Tate is away for drill or school or work. "She loves to have her grandbabies come over, but I don't ask her too much. She already raised us, and we're grown," she says. "I have a support system, but when it comes down to it, it's just me."

Still in the same house she bought in 2005, she knows that she's come a long way, and has proven herself to be a great role model to her children. Keyonté Williams, 12, Kamiya Williams, 11, Kasiya Williams, 9, all go to Cornerstone School, a few blocks away from the Woodlawn Resource Center. They have been able to participate in some of the programs there as well.

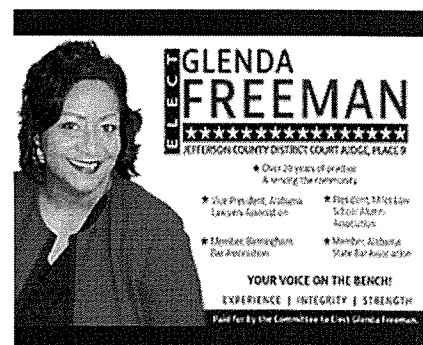
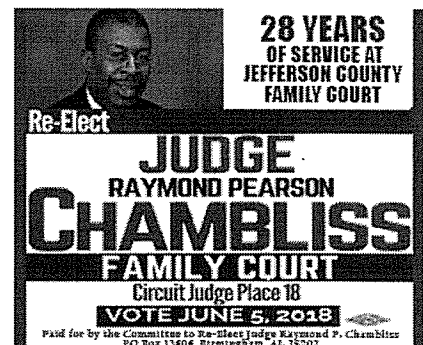
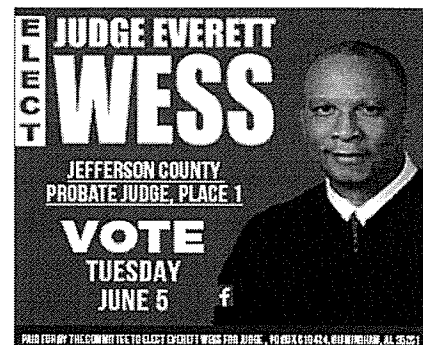
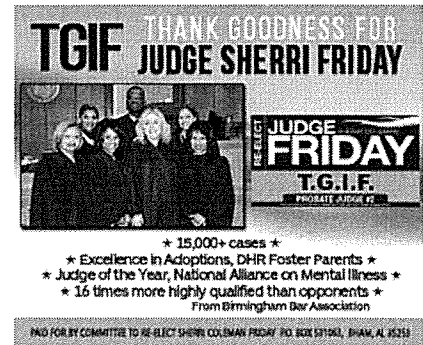
Currently, Tate is heading up the C.R.E.W. program at the center, which she started planning for in December. "It stands for Creating Responsible Educated Working Teens, and it's for students grade 9 through 12. We put them in actual work sites Monday through Wednesday and they work from 8 a.m. to noon.

"It's a lot of planning, but I am a planner anyway because of my life," Tate said with a laugh.

Enrichment

After work each day, the students return to the center to have a home-cooked lunch, and are able to listen to guest speakers and work on life skills training until 3 p.m. On Thursdays, the students are taken on enrichment trips, including Tuskegee University, Jacksonville State University and the University of Montevallo. They also recently paid a trip to Cooking Light Magazine to see how their operation works.

"I think they learn a lot. We do a lot of team building during orientation, and they learn that communication is key," Tate said. "They get paid a stipend of \$6 an hour, based on when they work Monday through Wednesday. They get paid on Thursday, in cash, and they have to pay us \$3 for their lunches just so they know that



when you get paid, you have bills to pay. It's the easiest money they will ever make."

This year 30 students are participating in the seven-week program. The work sites include the Family Resource Center, where some of the students work in the community garden, and then come back to the center and help prepare lunch for students and staff; others participate in the Jones Valley Teaching Farm at Woodlawn High School; at GraceWorks, part of Grace Episcopal Church, which is a summer camp for students; at the Birmingham Central Library; at Norwood Resource Center in the Norwood Master Gardening Camp; some are with United Cerebral Palsy; and a few work at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

"They come in and apply, and we interview them and go through a normal hiring process. More than 80 applied this year, so word of mouth has definitely been a big part of getting the kids here," Tate said. "We would love to increase the numbers but there is always some type or variable you have to work through, mainly funding and transportation."

Tate will be stationed at Woodlawn Resource Center another year through AmeriCorps, where she will undoubtedly make a difference in others' lives as she continues to better her own.

"I think AmeriCorps is a great opportunity to really hone in on what it is you're trying to do," she said. "It opens you up and allows you to come out of your shell, and to be an example for others. I think it's a great program."

AmeriCorps is a program that engages adults in public service work with a goal of helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.

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