



**Media Contact for Richmond, CA:**

Rochelle Monk  
rochelle\_monk@ci.richmond.ca.us  
(510) 620-6511 - office  
(510) 459-2524 - cell

**RICHMOND, CA AWARDED \$100,000 CITIES OF SERVICE GRANT TO EXPAND AND IMPLEMENT EDUCATION INITIATIVES AT LOCAL SCHOOLS**

**Grant Funds, Provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Will Support and Expand “Impact Volunteering” Initiatives to Increase High School and Elementary School Academic Achievement Success in Richmond**

December 17, 2013, Richmond, CA — After receiving a record-number of applications, Cities of Service announced that it has awarded \$100,000 to Richmond, California to implement service initiatives that harness the power of volunteers to help improve Richmond students’ writing and literacy skills. Richmond is one of 23 U.S. cities to win a Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund grant, which supports mayors who are implementing “impact volunteering” strategies that tackle pressing local challenges.

“I am honored that the City of Richmond has once again been awarded funding from Cities of Service to deepen our efforts to increase the academic success of our students,” said Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin. “I am so proud of our community organizations and volunteers who have embraced the Cities of Service model. With the strength of our volunteers, we are seeing solid, measurable results that confirm we are addressing one of our city’s greatest needs - supporting our youths’ educational development.”

Richmond’s \$100,000 grant will go towards recruiting and training community volunteers to coach 175 high school students to improve their writing skills, and 150 elementary school students to improve their literacy skills. The City of Richmond has once again partnered with Community Alliance for Learning to continue the WriterCoach Connection program at Richmond High School and to expand the program to John F. Kennedy High School. Two local organizations, Read Aloud Volunteer Program and Bring Me a Book, are added partners to help lead the initiative within local elementary schools.

The Cities of Service model focuses on impact volunteering — volunteer strategies that target community needs, use best practices, and set clear, measurable outcomes to gauge progress. Dozens of cities across the nation have adopted the model since its introduction in 2009. Cities that received first round grants from the Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund in October 2012 already have shown success leveraging volunteers across a range of issue areas.

Last year, Richmond received a \$25,000 grant through this program to support recruiting and training community volunteers to serve as writing coaches at Richmond High School through WriterCoach Connection. Currently through this program, more than 100 local, trained volunteers have served as writing coaches giving one-on-one writing instruction to 200 Richmond High School students.

“We are so grateful for this grant to continue our Richmond partnership,” says WriterCoach Connection Executive Director Robert Menzimer. “Everyone wins when we pool our resources like this. Our dedicated volunteers form deep bonds with their local public schools. Students receive pedagogically based guidance to improve their writing proficiency, develop critical thinking skills, and build academic confidence. And hard-working teachers love the individual attention coaches give to students that they can’t provide on their own.”

More than 60 mayors applied for Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund grants to support the implementation of nearly 90 initiatives. Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 also will support efforts in Allentown, PA; Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Birmingham, AL; Buffalo, NY; Campton Hills, IL; Charleston, SC; Fall River, MA; Flint, MI; Hartford, CT; Hayward, CA; Kalamazoo, MI; Kansas City, KS; Louisville, KY; Mesa, AZ; Milwaukee, WI; Nashville, TN; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; San Jose, CA; Utica, NY; and Washington, DC.

Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund is a multi-million dollar fund. Nearly \$1 million was awarded through the first round of grants in October 2012, with an additional \$1 million awarded through this second round. Grantee cities were selected based on the quality of initiative proposals, scale and potential for impact, and caliber of implementation plans, among other criteria. Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund initiatives address issues in the Cities of Service priority areas of education and youth, health, neighborhood revitalization, preparedness and safety, sustainability, and veterans.

### **About Cities of Service**

Founded in September 2009 in New York City by New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and 16 other mayors from across the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of over 180 mayors committed to addressing critical city needs through impact volunteering. American cities face serious challenges and many mayors want to take advantage of every resource available to them — including the time and energy of public-spirited residents — to address those challenges. But in cities across America today, citizen service is often an underutilized strategy by municipal governments. By leveraging citizen service strategies, Cities of Service helps mayors address local needs and make government more effective. To find out more about Cities of Service, visit our website at [www.citiesofservice.org](http://www.citiesofservice.org) or follow us on Twitter @CitiesOfService.

### **About Richmond ESC (Excellence Serving our Community)**

In February 2012, the City of Richmond’s impact volunteering initiative, branded Richmond ESC (Excellence Serving our Community) was launched to help deepen service and volunteerism across the City of Richmond. Partnering with established community organizations to engage volunteers, Richmond ESC seeks to address our city’s most pressing challenges in the areas of education and youth, neighborhood revitalization, and health. For more information regarding the City of Richmond’s impact volunteering initiative, visit [www.richmondvolunteers.org](http://www.richmondvolunteers.org) or contact us at (510) 620-6511.

###