

Austin Local News

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AmeriCorps Volunteers Pledge One Year at Capitol

Newsroom

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For Meredith Reid, the prospect of volunteering her time at east Austin's Allison Elementary School is something that brightens her day.

"It an opportunity to serve with a bigger, larger cause and create change in the world. I've always joked with the family growing up that I wanted to change the world and this is my way to do it," Reid said, as we caught up with her Friday afternoon on the south steps of the State Capitol. Reid is one of 150 or so volunteers with the AmeriCorps programs, combining Vista and CollegeForward, to help in improving the community. Reid will help in teaching reading at Alison, the same elementary school where just in the past two weeks, four children were poked with hypodermic needles. There is an effort to clean up a neighboring park.

Also in the AmeriCorps program Eddie Mathis, a recent University of Texas grad from Houston.

"I'm really excited. I'm not really thinking of it as a year of having to give something because I'm getting so much out of it myself. So I'm mostly just really excited about it," Mathis said. He will also be volunteering at an east Austin school, but not with his fellow volunteer, Meredith.

The group took the pledge as Texas State Representative Elliott Naishtat, who says he volunteered in Eagle Pass in the late '80s, described to them the importance of what they are doing.

The AmeriCorps program has a lot of help this year. From some volunteers who are older, yet most are of college age.

"For them to volunteer, since a lot of them are young, just out of college -- not all of them are -- but it really sets the stage for a lifetime of service. For some that have been in the work force for a while, maybe in the corporate world and wanted to give back to the community," Amelia Koford, AmeriCorps spokesperson, said Friday.

AmeriCorps says members will receive, in return for their work, "a modest living stipend and an education award that can be used for tuition and student loans."

(Hear KLBJ's Jarrod Allen's web-only report below; Windows Media Player v11 recommended)

