



August Monthly Message

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From the President



WENDY WHEELER, President,
Innovation Center for Community
and Youth Development

New Strategies to Link Service-Learning and Community Change

Here at the Innovation Center we've been gearing up to unroll our newest initiative - Collective Leadership Works. Beginning this September, we'll be teaming up with Learn & Serve America to bolster service-learning efforts at three organizations across the States.

Service-learning (according to CNCS) is an approach to both teaching and learning. It integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection. This combination not only enriches the learning experience, but teaches civic responsibility and strengthens communities.

Our partner organizations for this project are as excited about the work as we are - [Tohono O'odham Community Action \(TOCA\)](#) in Sells, AZ, [Youth Development Training and Resource Center \(YDTRC\)](#) in New Haven, CT, and the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) working in Watsonville, CA. These organizations work daily within some of the most disadvantaged communities in our nation; much of their strength lies in the young people they engage - young people who are ready and eager to make their hometowns healthier places.

Over the course of two years, we'll be working with these sites to boost their service-learning work by infusing it with collective leadership, an approach to leading that unites community members across boundaries and mobilizes human, cultural, and technological resources to make change for the common wellbeing. TOCA will be addressing the adult-onset diabetes crisis in the Tohono O'odham community; YDTRC will tackle violence and crime rates in New Haven; and the Monterey Bay Aquarium will work to preserve local wetlands and watersheds. Every day, young people at these organizations defy the odds dictated by their circumstances by changing the odds for future generations. The positive changes they make during this project will sustain their communities for years to come.

[Learn more](#) about our Collective Leadership Works initiative. Help us meet our fundraising goal - [donate](#) to Collective Leadership Works.

Activity of the Month: Teaching and Learning

In service-learning, participants teach others as much as they learn themselves. This dynamic - simultaneous teaching and learning - is part of what makes service-learning so effective. However, it is often difficult to break out of the traditional, prescribed student and teacher roles. This simple activity introduces participants to the idea that they can be at once both a teacher and a learner.

[Read more...](#)

Partner of the Month: Tohono O'odham Community Action

In the Southwestern United States, the Sonoran Desert stretches for over 100,000 square miles. At first glance, it does not appear to be an exactly hospitable environment - with recorded



temperatures reaching over 130 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade, it is one of North America's hottest deserts. However, for countless generations the Tohono O'odham - People of the Desert - have called this desert home. And today, Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA), a local community organization, is reincorporating the desert into Tohono O'odham life so that the Nation has a healthier and culturally rich future. [Read more...](#)

Is your organization a "hidden jewel"? [Tell us about it](#) - we might feature you in an upcoming Monthly Message!

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