

## **ESSAY: FUTURE OF JOB CORPS**

I have stood at the top of the Empire State Building. I've starred down the battlefields at Gettysburg National Military Park and Antietam National Battlefield. I have stood on the deck of the exact replica of the Mayflower, the Mayflower II. I've witnessed the U.S. Congress at the Capitol Building-and even saw John Kerry in person! I've explored where President Abraham Lincoln was shot and stood at the Memorial made in his honor. I've stood where Martin Luther King Jr. stood at the Lincoln Memorial; I know this since there is a message written in the floor. I have ridden a commercial airplane, Amtrak, ferries, a steamboat, and stood aboard the U.S.S. Constitution, U.S.S. Massachusetts, and a submarine. I have walked around Fort Mackinac, Colonial Williamsburg, Salem, MA, and Historic Jamestown. I've been to the top of an active volcano and stood on the equator. I took a ride, Space Shot, at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center located in Huntsville, AL. I've ridden an intense roller coaster at SeaWorld. I've waded in the Atlantic Ocean in both Maine and Florida. I was surrounded by sting rays, stuck in the middle of the river, and hanging off a cliff alone. I've seen the sunset over New York City's skyline and the sunrise over the Gulf of Mexico. I've been to many places, experienced quite a bit, and loved every minute of it. Although I've "been there, done that," I really wasn't anywhere. Those were just distractions. Distractions from where I really was. I consider myself to have been depressed, alone, and searching for myself while having fun and learning about everything I could.

I tried college, but money said a big "NO." I tried looking for a job, but employers refused to consider taking a chance with me. Job Corps was my last chance, and I knew I would have a hard time in the program. I applied to Job Corps, and after six years of "no," I heard a

“yes.” I like being wanted, so I went. Still lost, I’ve been allowing myself to learn about everything I can, so whenever I find who I am, I’ll be ready for whatever it is. I’ve learned that it’s better to stay on a track than have no track.

Even though I don’t really come from anywhere, now, through Job Corps, I know where I am going. I’m going forward.