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GOVERNOR PATRICK MEETS WITH COMMONWEALTH CORPS MEMBERS SERVING STUDENTS IN HOLYOKE

HOLYOKE - Friday, February 13, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick today met with college student volunteers from Commonwealth Corps and the students and teachers they serve at the William R. Peck School in Holyoke. Legislators, school officials and Corps program coordinators joined Governor Patrick during his classroom visit.

"Through Commonwealth Corps, we ask Massachusetts residents to recognize the stake we have in each other and in building stronger communities," said Governor Patrick. "I am so pleased to see how students from area colleges are answering that call to service. They are making a difference in the lives of Holyoke's children - helping them to succeed both inside and outside the classroom."

Recognizing the importance of volunteerism and civic engagement, Governor Patrick established the Commonwealth Corps service program in November 2007. The program works with non-profit and public agencies to create opportunities for service that address unmet community needs. Today more than 270 Corps members are on the ground across Massachusetts serving with 36 partner organizations and have helped to mobilize nearly 2,000 additional community volunteers.

Supported by a \$40,200 Commonwealth Corps grant, Holyoke Corps connects college student volunteers from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mount Holyoke College and Holyoke Community College in service to the larger community. Members serve as tutors and mentors; support college awareness programs, workshops and events; participate in community-based events and help bring other campus resources to Holyoke. The program has already reached 200 students at the Peck School.

"At Peck we are very aware that we can't meet all of our students' and their families' needs by ourselves, and we're working on continuously strengthening our relationships with local partner organizations and institutions," said Paul Hyry, Peck School Principal. "That's why we're so excited about working with Mount Holyoke College, Holyoke Community College, and UMass Amherst as part of the Governor's Commonwealth Corps initiative. Our students benefit on a daily basis from the added academic support of having Commonwealth Corps college students in our classroom, and the Corps members do a great job of helping our students have a stronger awareness of what college is like."

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