

THE PROBLEM

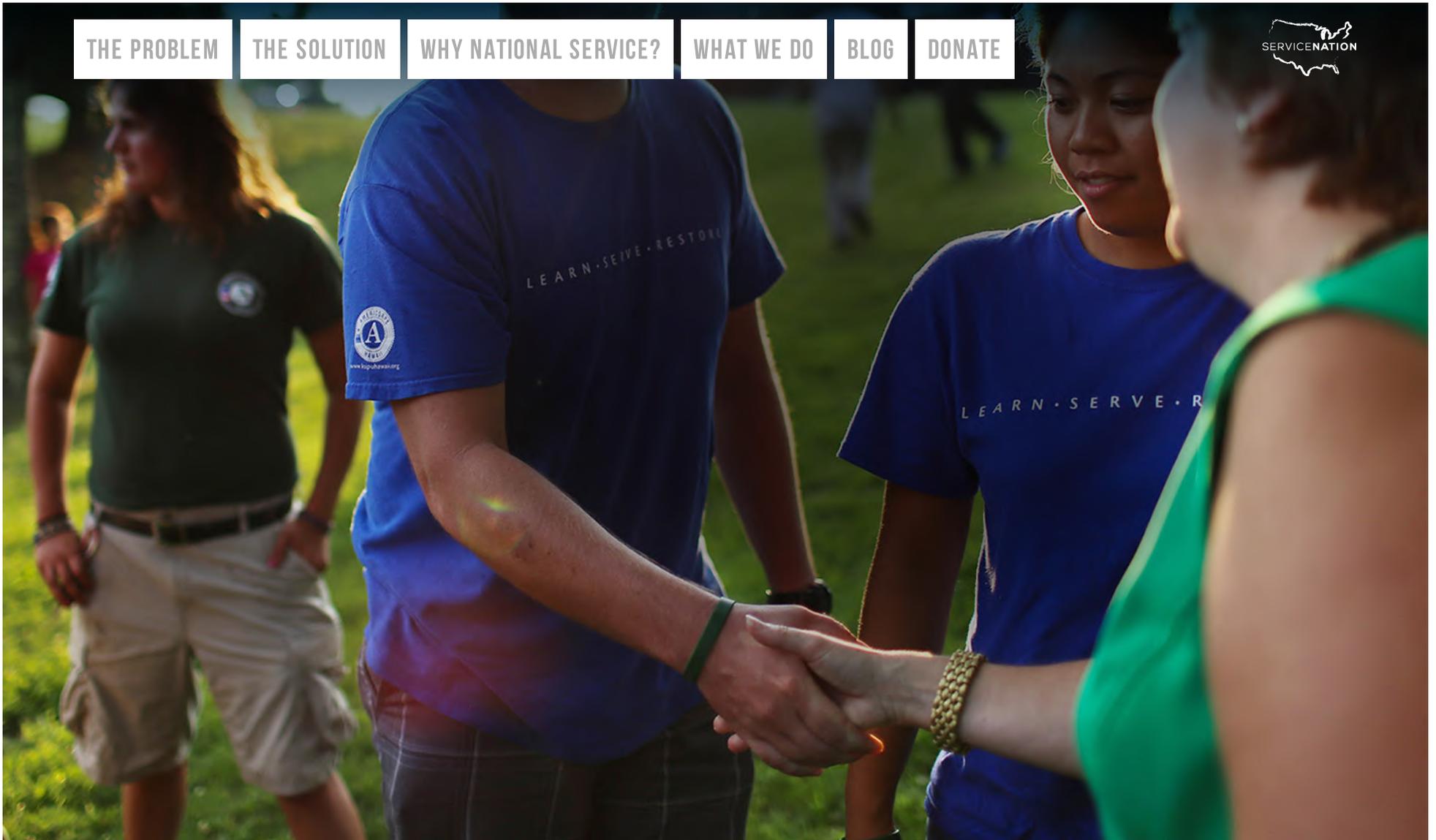
THE SOLUTION

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# WITHOUT AN AMERICORPS MEMBER IN MY LIFE...

Posted by Travis Ross, Brockton, Ma on September 03, 2013

My name is Travis Ross and I attended Brockton High School in Brockton, MA. I have made some very poor decisions in



my life, that put me in an unsuccessful position regarding school and also leaving me jobless, but **thanks to the Brockton Youth Council and AmeriCorps, I have been extremely dedicated to getting my life back on the right track.**

Some things that I have got involved with are the Boys and Girls Club basketball league, graduating high school, obtaining a job, and focusing on my music which I am very passionate about. In the beginning of my high school career, I was transferred to the BB Russell Alternative School for my negative behavior at Brockton High. While attending the BB Russell my goal was to maintain a good grade average and control my attitude/temper so that I could get back into

Brockton High.

Later on in the year, I was introduced to an AmeriCorps member who was serving with the Massachusetts Promise Fellowship, a statewide program that places individuals in communities to work with young people in out-of-school time programs. He was serving out of the Brockton Mayor's office and his name was Yves Singletary. Yves helped start my journey to get back on the right track. He was the reason why I got involved in the Mayor's Youth Summit for the first year and also helped improve both my resume and interviewing etiquette to help land me a job.

As the next school year came into place, it was my senior year and I knew that I had to get back to Brockton High School so that I could enjoy my last year, as alternative high school was not the ideal high school experience. It was my responsibility this year to help pick the new AmeriCorps member serving at the Brockton Mayor's Office with the Massachusetts Promise Fellowship. Out of three candidates, I felt as if Katie Walper was most suitable candidate for this position. Katie had very high energy, understanding of the position and city, and passionate about youth. She also had the right skill and mindset to motivate young people to live up to their full potential. I was currently jobless and when I reached out to Katie, we updated my resume and practiced interview etiquette. Even though I did not receive the first jobs I applied for, I felt better prepared answering the questions about the job process thanks to her practice. Soon, I became employed by Toys R Us' as a seasonal associate.

During this time I also was able to return to Brockton High for my tremendous turn around displayed in school and my extracurricular activities outside of school. I was quickly realizing that my life was turning around for the better. Without an AmeriCorps member in my life, I seriously do not think I would have been able to come this far in such a short time. Katie has also connected me to other AmeriCorps members in her program, who mentor me with my passion of music. I am

blessed to have someone like Katie in my life to really show me that change is possible. **Since then, I have graduated from Brockton High School, work at Payless, and applied to the local community college in Brockton in hopes to study Radiology.**

One thing that Katie has opened opportunities to my music career. As I grew up, I was interested in rapping and hoping one day that I can create a positive message through my music. I have performed multiple times in front of younger children and an end of year job ceremony with a piece that I wrote called “Youth Help”. Also I have performed in an open mic night that was hosted by a the Brockton Youth Council with two pieces, “Youth Help” and “Mama Proud” which featured a good friend of mine, Carl Percy. In the song “Youth Help” is a positive message I wrote that reaches out to youth understanding problems they may go through and my response is supporting them to make the right decisions, no matter what it takes. “Mama Proud” was a song dedicated to our mothers stating that “We just want our mama’s to be proud of us”. As I create more messages for people to hear me out, **I hope one day to be remembered for someone who wanted to create change.**

The past three years of working with AmeriCorps members has impacted my life in so many ways. It has helped me stay on track, develop professional skills, follow my passion for music, and hold a job for over a year now. Although Yves and Katie have supported me through the good and bad, they taught me if I wanted to create change, it had to start with me. Even though there were times of doubt, I reminded myself of my personal goals and pushed through the hard times. I am excited to start college, continue with the Brockton Youth Council and help my city, and stay in touch with the AmeriCorps members.

*Learn more about the Massachusetts Promise Fellowship, by [visiting their website](#).*

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