

Saving the World. Maybe you're a retiree looking for a way to use your professional expertise. Or a recent grad hoping for something more meaningful than slinging lattes. Or a man or woman on a life-changing mission. In these hard times, there are countless places where you can make a difference.

Service Sector Looking to lend a hand? Try these programs.

AROUND GREATER CINCINNATI

The United Way of Greater Cincinnati is a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities in the region. Go to www.uwgc.org, click on "Volunteer," and search for a service opportunity based on the organization that needs help, your skills, and availability. Programs include a Young Professionals group with a Facebook page and Twitter feed; Experience Matters (for retirees and those 55+); **the Board Orientation &**

Leadership Development Program (BOLD), which prepares participants to serve on nonprofit boards; and the BoardBank, which helps organizations fill board openings. Another one-stop shop is www.NKYHelps.org, with information on ways you can help in Northern Kentucky.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

If you want to work for your country, AmeriCorps has multiple programs; some are for young adults; others are for seasoned professionals; many offer a stipend or living allowance to make the year-long commitment financially feasi-

ble. AmeriCorps VISTA, for example, with its mission to fight poverty, has one-year, full-time assignments to help build the infrastructure of a nonprofit or public agency that serves low-income communities. Rather serve people directly? **If you're 55+, check out Senior Corps, which includes a foster grandparent program that works with at-risk children** and a senior companion program for assisting older adults with day-to-day living. www.seniorcorps.gov, www.americorps.gov

AROUND THE WORLD

Want to run away and join the Peace Corps? Good news—you can, as long as you're at least 18 and can make a 27-month commitment. Members work in 76 different countries on projects that range from teaching English to advising businesses to working with people affected by HIV/AIDS. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and **the corps matches applicants with projects that fit their interests and expertise.** The Chicago office serves our region, and a recruiter there will contact you after you apply. www.peacecorps.gov, www.peacecorps.gov/50plus, (312) 353-4990, chicago@peacecorps.gov



→ **CHANGE AGENT**

"AN EXTREMELY EXCITING TIME." That's what **WILLIAM HALL** has the audacity to call our current economic state. But as the executive director of the Ohio Community Service Council, he's got a point. "Under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act," he says, "we're looking at major expansions in AmeriCorps, including all elements of national service." You see, when President Obama signed the Serve America Act last April, he effectively increased AmeriCorps' national member capacity from 75,000 annual positions to 250,000 by 2017. And Hall's job with the OCSC is to ensure the smooth operation of most national service programs in our state, including AmeriCorps and such Cincinnati chapters as the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative and the Urban Appalachian Council. Groups like these are in perennial need for volunteers to tutor underprivileged kids and guide first generation high school students through the maze of college applications. Other service opportunities exist in health-and-hunger-related programs, financial literacy, and environmental programs. You won't get rich (AmeriCorps service earns you a small living stipend) but, Hall says, the rewards are great. "If you're in a situation of distress—if you've lost your job, or you're at a point of some type of personal turmoil or at a point of indecision—any time you take the focus off of yourself and put it on someone else's needs, it always refocuses your own issues." And in this down economy, Hall notes that the need for national service members has never been higher. "We can expand the capacities of our organizations," he says, "but I don't know that we could ever match the need." Visit www.serveohio.org for more info. — **BRENT DONALDSON**