

City Year Recruits UC San Diego Undergraduates to Help K-12 Students Succeed



Shaila Bonanno

Last quarter, Shaila Bonanno graduated from UC San Diego with a bachelor's degree in human biology and aspirations to pursue medical school. Before she begins her medical training, however, Bonanno is taking a gap year to pursue another passion: teaching. She applied to and has been accepted to serve with City Year, an AmeriCorps program that partners with public schools in high-need communities to help keep students in school and on track to graduation.

Founded in 1988, City Year's mission is to help bridge the gap between what students need and what schools are designed to provide. The program partners with schools and teachers to place 2,500 volunteers in more than 200 high-need schools across the country. Corps members work to keep young people in school and on track academically through in-class support, one-on-one and small group tutoring, mentoring and after school programs.

"Participating in programs like City Year is one example of how UC San Diego students choose to make giving back to the community part of their education and career path," said Alan Houston, interim vice chancellor for Student Affairs. "We're proud of the commitment to public service that our students demonstrate. It's one of the reasons UC San Diego has been ranked first in the country for positive impact for four years in a row now by Washington Monthly."

Bonanno was inspired to give a year of service to public education after she took a course through UC San Diego's department of education studies. The class included tutoring at local schools.

"Both of my parents are teachers," she said. "From them and from volunteering through my education studies class, I learned that I really enjoy working one-on-one with students."

As a City Year corps member, Bonanno will participate in an intensive summer training program before being placed in an elementary or middle school in Sacramento. One of her challenges will be to work with teachers to set individual goals for students. Since students learn at different paces, she

explained, setting individual goals and working one-on-one with students to achieve them is important for student success.

“I’m looking forward to the new experience,” said Bonanno. “I think it’s going to be eye-opening to see the difference between these schools and my own elementary and junior high school experience.”

City Year recruits its corps members from a highly competitive national applicant pool; approximately one in four applicants is selected. In addition to impacting K-12 students, City Year is designed to help corps members develop leadership and professional skills. The program has a network of more than 18,000 City Year alumni working across sectors, from education and nonprofit to medicine, law and finance.

“City Year corps members are as diverse a group as the communities they serve,” said Erica Eddings, a regional recruitment manager with City Year. “We’re looking for individuals who have a desire to work alongside teachers and a diverse group of peers to support the students who need that extra attention, and who are ready to make a difference through a challenging and fulfilling experience.”

City Year provides a modest living stipend and health insurance. In addition, all City Year members can request their qualified student loans be put into forbearance during their term of service. Upon completion, corps members also receive an education award of \$5,550 through AmeriCorps.

For more information about City Year and to apply for the program, visit the [City Year website](#). Applications are accepted on a rolling basis; the next application deadline is April 30.

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