

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mount Hope Cemetery Clean-Up Scheduled for March 8 to Kick Off Belleville AmeriCorps Week



Belleville, Ill. – February 24, 2020 – AmeriCorps Week is slated for March 8-15, and together with the City of Belleville, Belleville AmeriCorps is set to clean up debris and litter at Mount Hope Cemetery, 9401 W. Main St., to kick off the week’s events.

“The City of Belleville spends about \$100,000 to maintain Mount Hope Cemetery, which is in receivership and doesn’t actually belong to the city,” said Mayor Mark Eckert. “In fact, it’s the state comptroller’s office that is responsible for the property, but this is something we’ve taken on to ensure property values remain stable on the west end and so that the cemetery doesn’t turn into a dumping ground or nuisance for our residents. The partnership we’ve built with Belleville AmeriCorps is huge in helping us maintain that property. If not for the efforts by our Public Works Department and volunteers like Belleville AmeriCorps, Mount Hope would look very differently than it does.”

Funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Belleville AmeriCorps supports neighborhood and school efforts to strengthen the community. To carry out that mission, Belleville AmeriCorps members increase academic success by tutoring, encouraging community engagement through youth and adult volunteerism, providing positive recreational and enrichment activities for youth during after-school hours and the summer months, and promoting computer literacy.

Belleville AmeriCorps was established in 1995 in partnership with SWIC, Belleville School District 118, the City of Belleville and the Franklin Neighborhood Community Association. Since then, more than 1,200 members have served nearly 900,000+ hours tutoring students, serving as summer camp counselors, rehabilitating homes, promoting neighborhood beautification, and convening neighborhood watch groups.

“There is a lot of both East St. Louis and Belleville history in that cemetery, which was established in 1896,” said Eckert. “It’s important to honor that history and our city by keeping it well maintained.”

The Mount Hope Cemetery clean up will be held Sun., March 8 from 9 a.m. until noon and is open to anyone who would like to volunteer. To sign up for the volunteer event, contact Belleville AmeriCorps Program Director Jay Stokes at 618-235-2700 ext. 5711 or jay.stokes@swic.edu.

###

The City of Belleville, Illinois, incorporated in 1814, is the St. Clair County seat and the largest city in southern Illinois. With a current population of 44,478 (2010), Belleville is home to the longest contiguous main street in the United States, excellent education and healthcare organizations, and thriving businesses and neighborhoods, including three National Historic Districts. Mayor Mark Eckert runs the municipal government along with elected officials including City Clerk Jennifer Gain Meyer, Treasurer Dean Hardt, and 16 aldermen representing eight city wards. The vision for the City of Belleville is one where all sectors of the community work together to help the city grow and prosper and to become a model for other communities to follow.