

## W-3: Sustain energy to reach ambitious goals

### **Build meaningful relationships with your students**

As many corps members can attest to, the more you get to know your students' lives, interests, hopes, and burdens the deeper you care for them, and as a result – the more energy you are able to maintain over the course of the year as you lead them on the path to academic achievement. Most teachers use a variety of methods to get to know their students better, from involvement in the community, to home visits, to one-on-one conversations or lunches, to careful attention to journal entries. Teachers who end up achieving ambitious goals with their students recognize that the student-teacher relationship not only informs planning and instruction, but also energizes and maintains the teacher's relentlessness over time.

Patricia McKee (Philadelphia '05) explains: "Home visits were THE most powerful thing I did to get to know my students. I'm a very visual person – when I think about what my students are like and why they act the way they do, it's important for me to have seen them in their home environment. It's so enlightening to see where they come from and where they go after school, and understanding this aspect of my students' lives has made me even more committed to providing them with the opportunities they have been denied."

Building relationships with your students can also personalize your outrage about the achievement gap, further intensifying another powerful source of energy and motivation.