



# Esprit de Corps



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## Washington Service Corps and ARRA

The Washington Service Corps was created by the state legislature in 1983 to provide citizens with opportunities to serve their communities. Administered by the state Employment Security Department, the Washington Service Corps (WSC) partners with private and non-profit organizations and with local governments to address unmet community needs and to provide citizens with meaningful service experiences.

In 1993 the federal AmeriCorps program was created to provide the opportunity to serve a common mission of providing citizens with opportunities to serve their communities. The Washington Service Corp (WSC) joined this new program as well, both involving the WSC in a nationwide effort as well as providing a source of federal funding through the corporation for National Commission on Community Service.

During the September 2009—August 2010 service year, the Washington Service Corps received “base” federal funding to sponsor 630 AmeriCorps and more than 100 VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members. The members serve on multiple projects with a variety of agencies and organizations. Projects are designed to improve students’ educational achievement, the environment, public safety and public health.

In addition, through an American Reinvestment and Recovery Act grant (ARRA), an additional 130 AmeriCorps members and 45 VISTA members have been added for the 2009-2010 service year to help support Washington’s economic recovery efforts.



These Service Corps members serve at community non-profit organizations, government entities and schools located across the state to help address the needs of those hardest hit by the economic downturn. The (ARRA) federal recovery grant has seven areas of service on which state programs may focus, and the Washington Service Corps will concentrate on five of them. They are described to the right and are listed in more detail on page 5.

- 1. Employment and Training**
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# WithinReach

By Angie Gaffney (WithinReach)

In today's uncertain economic climate, more and more Americans find themselves in precarious financial situations. When budgets are tight, families must make difficult decisions about where and how their money is spent, and all too often immediate financial needs come at the expense of the family's health and well-being.

There are numerous public assistance programs to help families, including Women Infants and Children (WIC), Basic Food, Apple Health for Kids, and various utility assistance programs. However, many families and individuals are not aware of these services, do not think they qualify, or have trouble navigating the public assistance system. In King County alone, only two-thirds of households eligible for Basic Food benefits receive them. The Bridge to Basics project, led by AmeriCorps members accompanied by United Way volunteers, connects King County residents in need to these crucial assistance programs. In addition, Bridge to Basics provides one-on-one assistance to clients, many of whom are part of chronically underserved populations. One AmeriCorps member shared this story of the power and ability of the campaign to effect positive changes in a client's life:

A single, 70-year-old woman with an overdue light bill visited the Neighborhood Service Center in the Seattle Central District to pay what she could on her nearly \$1,200 bill in order to avoid a dis-

connection notice. She is a proud woman who has worked her entire life in childcare, but is currently on leave due to two recent deaths in her family and her own medical issues. This individual values her independence and ability to work and has never before had an overdue bill. She has been the one giving, never receiving, and has difficulty accepting the assistance that she now needs from others.

Through Bridge to Basics, the United Way volunteer and the AmeriCorps Site Coordinator were able to sit down with her in privacy and listen to her story. They provided information on basic food and utility assistance programs to help pay her bill. Having talked with her extensively in an intimate setting, they were also able to refer her to other, personalized resources as well, including low-cost counseling. She left with a hug uttering countless thanks, tears of calmed frustration, acceptance, and gratitude welling in her eyes. "I can't tell you how happy I am that I stopped in today, thank you so much".

The Bridge to Basics Site Coordinator followed up with her to find that she had missed her Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) appointment for Basic Food due to a conflicting medical appointment. However, after talking to the AmeriCorps

member, she was encouraged to reschedule her DSHS appointment and to contact the other agencies referred to her. She was again touched and grateful that 'the system' took the time to see how she was doing, both with the potentially overwhelming application process and on a personal level as well.



# Washington Ready\*Corps Program

## American Red Cross Serving King and Kitsap Counties

*By Terri Jack (WSC Program Coordinator)*

VISTA Members Kerra Lampman-Warnke, David Munger and Jennifer Stock-Calhoun serve with the Bremerton office of the American Red Cross Serving King & Kitsap County. On October 12, all three members participated in "Operation Alligator," a federally funded exercise designed to bring together government and nonprofit agencies to practice their response to an attack on a school.

The Department of Emergency Management uses grant money each year to conduct a terrorism-

response drill, which costs close to \$200,000 for props and overtime pay for participants. Most of the agencies that participated in Monday's drill had a "cold start" — they had no advance knowledge of the details of the drill. The format for Monday's drill involved a school being commandeered and students and teachers being taken hostage.

Members worked with the American Red Cross volunteers in food support for the event. They had a chance to work with volunteers from all of the Emergency Services fields. In addition, the American Red Cross used this opportunity to run their own drill to respond to a terrorist emergency. Member Jennifer Stock-

Calhoun was given the task of contacting their volunteers in order to man the Emergency Operation Center and the school site. The experience was an excellent training and networking opportunity.

## **To Read More About the WSC Ready\*Corps Program, Follow These Links:**

**"Kitsap Authorities Practice for a Worst-Case Scenario With 'Operation Alligator'"**

<http://kitsapsun.com/news/2009/oct/12/kitsap-authorities-practice-for-a-worst-case/>

**"Underprivileged Kids On Keel"**

# WSC VISTA Individual Program

## Rainier Valley Rowing Club

*By Terri Jack (WSC Program Coordinator)*

VISTA Member Carla Bezold serves with the Rainier Valley Rowing Club, part of the Pocock Foundation, a Seattle based nonprofit. The Rainier Valley Rowing Club received national media attention, with a piece on ABC's Nightly news program on October 22, 2009.

Rowing is a sport steeped in tradition, strength and in most cases, money. This program, with the help of donations, puts low-income youth in the program to teach them about teamwork, patience, discipline and of course,

rowing! None of the youth have had prior experience with rowing and those that don't know how to swim receive swimming lessons as part of the program.



# Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers — A look Inside

*By Mily Teske (WACMHC Tobacco Network Specialist)*

We have been working on a Learning Congress on Tobacco Policy & Advocacy. This event was held December 1, 2009 in Seattle. The goal was to train network partners to build digital stories, and how they can be an advocacy tool to help change policies.

The congress also focused on the tobacco quit line and intervention. The purpose is to create a smoke free Washington, and to advocate for people who are not receiving enough information on the health dangers of tobacco use, especially when tobacco companies target youth.

They are creating cigarettes that are flavored to attract teens into becoming addicts. This is part of the war on tobacco. The world health organization has reports that state tobacco kills one person every 10 seconds, and is set to kill 10 million by the year 2025, and every 30 seconds someone dies of lung cancer. Nicotine addiction is more fatal than alcohol abuse or heroin, and kills 5 million each year. 49,000 people die each year

from second hand smoke. Tobacco companies spent 35 billion dollars in 2005 to promote their products, and even though the label says its dangerous.. they leave out the important facts.

The majority of the public knows that smoking causes cancer, but what they don't know is that according to the Center For Disease Control "Smoking causes cancers of the bladder, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, cervix, kidney, lung, pancreas, and stomach, and causes acute myeloid leukemia".

Most teens use dip products and are unaware that one pouch is equal to four cigarettes and one can equal having smoked 60. They are also unaware that cigarettes contain 60 carcinogen causing agents and when lit ignite 4,000 deadly toxins.

We are advocating to have local and state leaders understand the gravity of this disease. More deaths are caused each year

by tobacco use than by all deaths from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined. (CDC 1997 Morbidity Report)



*To Read More About the WACMHC's Activities Click the Following link:  
"New Law Bans Flavored Cigarettes"*

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/QuitToLive/law-bans-sale-flavored-cigarettes/story?id=8640262>

# ARRA Funds- Program Focus

## Cont. From Page 1 (Areas of Service for ARRA Funds)

### **Employment and training**

Due to the nature of the current recession, thousands of Washingtonians are unemployed for the first time in their lives, and the state's employment and training offices (WorkSource career centers\*) are being pushed to their limits to help everyone who walks in their doors. Increasingly, job-seekers need to use a computer to look for work – but many have insufficient experience with computers. In response, the Washington Service Corps partnered with the WorkSource system to place 12 members across the state (one in each workforce development region) to help job seekers use computers and Web-based job-search systems.

*\* WorkSource is a partnership of Employment Security, other state agencies, local governments, colleges and nonprofit organizations that work together to provide free employment and training services to job seekers and businesses. There are nearly 70 WorkSource locations across Washington state.*

### **Building capacity of non-profit agencies**

Across the state, the demand for services from non-profit agencies is growing substantially. Service Corps members are helping expand the capacity of nonprofit agencies to better meet those needs.

Service opportunities include helping food banks to bring in

donations and distribute food. Some members are helping the growing number of homeless people to obtain services, while others help at-risk homeowners find ways to keep their homes.

### **Healthcare access**

Many people have lost their health insurance along with their jobs, and they may not know how to obtain free or reduced-priced services in their communities. Service Corps members have been placed with local health organizations to help conduct information campaigns that promote health services and connect citizens to available services.

### **Low-income home weatherization**

Partnering with the Department of Commerce, the state agency responsible for weatherization programs, the Service Corps has placed members in community-action agencies across the state to help connect low-income homeowners with the resources and information available through local weatherization programs. These efforts will allow low-income households to realize cost-savings through increased home energy efficiencies.

### **First-generation college students**

In the fall of 2009, an additional 20 Service Corps members joined the Federal Way Public Schools' program. They are serving in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program to

help with dropout prevention and increase prospects for post-secondary education.

AVID helps level the playing field for minority and low-income students by preparing students without a college-going tradition in their families to meet college eligibility requirements. The additional Service Corps members expand the reach of AVID's proven and successful approach to give many more at-risk students the chance to achieve greater success and ultimately obtain viable employment.

### **Capacity building and volunteer mobilization**

Forty-five VISTA members are placed across the state to expand the reach of current VISTA projects. These projects focus on disaster preparedness for vulnerable populations, mentoring children of incarcerated parents, and increasing capacity of nonprofit and community-based organizations that address the needs of those in poverty. A common objective of all WSC VISTAs is to build or enhance sustainable volunteer components of the agencies in which they serve and increase capacity through recruitment, training and management of community volunteers.



## Important Dates

# December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 <i>Timesbeets Due —Team</i>	8	9	10 <i>Pay Day</i>	11	12
13	14	15 <i>Timesbeets Due — IP</i>	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 <i>Timesbeets Due —Team</i>	23 <i>Project Report Due</i>	24 <i>Pay Day</i>	25 <i>Christmas WSC —Closed</i>	26
27	28	29	30	31 <i>Timesbeets Due — IP</i>		

## Weatherization — A look Inside, To Keep the Outside Out

By Nathan Carroll (WSC Team Leader)

During the last 32 years the Department of Energy's (DOE) weatherization program has assisted more the 6.2 million low-income families. Last year, the Washington Service Corps decided to increase these numbers. Since then the WSC has placed over 25 members in DOE weatherization offices across Washington state. This was made possible by the ARRA funding provided to us for exactly this purpose.

We are now well into this year's service and already both the WSC and the DOE have been very pleased with our members service. I visited one group of members earlier today and to my surprise only one member was in the building, everyone else was out in the field surveying a house for weatherization needs and qualifications. With the members already very busy at

9AM, I sat down with CJ Conner (the only remaining member serving in the building) to get a feel about what they have been doing for the past few months.

CJ estimated that his team of members; located at the Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason, and Thurston Counties, usually visit about 20-30 houses a month and provide a full range of services to an estimated 70%-80% of their clients. They offer everything from house repair (windows, doors, roofs), to finding places where hot air can escape from the house or cold air can get in, to fixing non-functional furnaces.

Later I asked CJ if he had any memorable moments with any of his clients. He recalled an older women living in a run-down trailer (he learned later that she was also very sick from a form of cancer).

He continued to describe what can only be called a heart-breaking situation. With her furnace broken and her trailer with almost no ability to keep in heat, the woman was forced to keep warm by a wood fire with some blankets. I asked CJ what they were able to do for her and he proudly listed off a long list of services that included a new roof, new windows, a new door, a fixed furnace, and insulation throughout her trailer. CJ estimated that this cost about \$5,000 altogether and with a \$6,500 cap limit on any one house. One thing is for sure, these weatherization wizards make the money last and the people happy.



# Students & Community Celebrate Disability Mentoring Day at WorkSource

By Kathleen Alexander (Former VISTA-Disability Program Navigator) and Terri Whalen (VISTA—Disability Program Navigator)

Heart. Joy. Inspiration. These words describe our day at Thurston County WorkSource, as we celebrated Disability Mentoring Day with thirty students with disabilities and numerous community supporters.

It all began with a delicious continental breakfast from Julia's Bakery and Costco. Then, high school and transition students from programs all over Thurston County departed for their job-shadow sites with local businesses: *The Ritz, Westside Cooperative Preschool, DSB, Corvette and High Performance, Puget Sound Health Care, The Valley Athletic Club, Alliance, Inc., McDonald's (Westside), Wal-Mart, Olive Garden, Safeway, Olympia's Capitol Security, Intercity Transit, Thurston County DVR, ROXY Radio, Left Foot Organic Farm.* One student helped the TCTV mobile film crew document the day! All of these amazing employers taught the students about their businesses, and students showed the various talents they could bring to the workplace!

After a couple hours of job-shadowing, the students returned to WorkSource for a catered lunch provided by Olive Garden and Red Lobster and Gatorade from Lowe's. During lunch, Adam Lee, Inspirational Speaker and balloon artist extraordinaire, dazzled us with his balloon sculptures, as he shared his own struggles and triumphs over the stigma of disability.

Next, we enjoyed an interactive playback theatre performance by The Heart Sparkle Players. Students told stories about their job-shadow experiences and the troop acted out an interpretation of their stories. The students laughed and

clapped as the actors created a shared experience for the audience. A student stated he loves working with children because they always make his day better. He also said he feels proud when he walks into the classroom and children excitedly exclaim, "It's Sam Day!"

AmeriCorps Youth Employment Specialist, Sara Abbott, treated the students to a tour of the WorkSource along with an open invitation to come into WorkSource to see her if they would like employment advice or support.

Finally, each student received a goody bag filled with wonderful donations given by supportive businesses in our community: *KRXY, Sizzler, Capitol Chiropractic, Bally's Fitness, Ram Restaurant & Brewery, The Rock Wood Fire Pizza, Chuck E. Cheese, Color Graphics, Northwest Harley Davidson, and Bayview Thriftway.*

At the close of the day, Lynnae Ruttledge, DVR Director and recent President Obama appointee, handed out certificates, a dose of encouragement, and big CONGRATULATIONS to all.



# Make A Difference Day — Wildlife Refuge Gets an Upgrade

By Abigail Anderson (NEW Alliance Program)

It seemed like just another morning in Republic, Washington. A leafy smell tickled the noses of our town's early birds and its hopeful hunters. The ol' timers swapped stories in local business as they drank their cups of coffee and most school students relished the hours they got to sleep in on this particular Saturday morning. Some town folks probably did not even know that October 24, 2009 was not just another ordinary day. The sun rose this particular morning celebrating "Make a Difference Day", a national calendar day famous for helping others -- a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors.

A group of volunteers rose early, wrapped up in warm clothes, and met at the Ferry Conservation District's Roberta Wildlife Refuge property willing to work hard, simply to "make a difference." Roberta Wildlife Refuge nestles north of W. Herron Creek Road, at the south end of Curlew Lake. Bordering west of the site, the rail trail makes it a place overflowing with potential. "It is a large, pristine wetland, which supports a vast diversity of plants and wildlife. The area presents a great opportunity for people who want to observe local wildlife and enjoy a quiet spot close to town," explains Lloyd Odell, the Ferry Conservation District Manager who has spent hours on the site himself enjoying the peacefulness of the area.

Armed with shovels, shrub clippers, and gloves, the army of forty volunteers, made up of community members and the NEW Alliance AmeriCorps team, fell happily to their tasks. The trail was marked and a tractor aided members of the team by cutting the ground and providing a basis for the actual trail construction. The new trail was leveled with gravel which was laid and raked. Although the entire trail was not finished, there was much congratulation. The AmeriCorps and the Conservation District plan on completing the trail in the spring.

The trail was not the only focus however. "Providing natural habitat for local wildlife is a major part of what we are about," admits Mr. Odell. Plots of young trees and shrubs border the trail, providing a future habitat for Curlew Lake's diverse wildlife. Many volunteers worked hard to clean up these plots, pulling weeds, re-laying black tarp and repairing protective fence which will encourage growth of the young plants. Some took the opportunity to teach their children about the importance of

soil, water, and sunshine in the germination process, while others enjoyed indentifying the different types of weeds and grasses. It was a community learning experience!

During lunch, provided by the combined efforts of both the Conservation District and AmeriCorps members, there was much discussion about the future vision for this area as haven for hikers, bird watchers, picnickers, and lovers of outdoor recreation. "Once the project is completed we want the property to retain its quiet and secluded nature, but we want to make it more easily accessible for everyone in our community to enjoy wildlife in its natural habitat," explained a hopeful and determined Mr. Odell when asked about future plans for the area. The Conservation District hopes to further construct a leisurely area with picnic tables, park benches, bridges and bird watching stands. The nursery will keep expanding by introducing new native trees and shrubs, generation after generation, to support our local wilderness and has plenty of potential for experiment and new ideas.

Republic should be very proud of its citizens who took the time to leave a legacy and give back to a community that has given them so much. How wonderful to have a group of people who has improved our area and taken the opportunity to enrich their lives through volunteer work. "I feel really great about what I did. I feel like I made a difference," shared Christine Jenkins, who recently moved with her family to the area. "It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with the people in my new community. I loved every minute of it! I am definitely proud! See you on the trail!"



# Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service



<<http://www.mlkday.gov/>>

## Why Serve!

During the 1950s and '60s, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals.

Initiated by Congress in 1994, King Day of Service builds on that legacy by transforming the federal holiday honoring Dr. King into a national day of community service grounded in his teachings of nonviolence and social justice. The aim is to make the holiday a day ON, where people of all ages and backgrounds come together to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and move our nation closer to the "Beloved Community" that Dr. King envisioned.

## How to Serve!

How can you be a part of the Martin Luther King Day of Service? You can join an organized service project in your area or help fill a need yourself—by tutoring a child, helping an elderly neighbor, serving in a homeless shelter, or volunteering at a school or community organization.

There are many ways to find service opportunities in your community on the King holiday and throughout the year. These links will guide you to several listed services planned for this day.

### Volunteer Opportunities

<<http://www.mlkmobilization.com/memos/archive/memo1.html>>

### Volunteer Opportunities

<<http://www.serve.gov/>>



# *Washington State* **SERVICE CORPS**

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT



## *Washington State* **SERVICE CORPS**

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT



EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT



**WASHINGTON**  
**READING CORPS**

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