



2010 AmeriCorps Week Recap

National AmeriCorps Week

2010: Another Successful AmeriCorps Week!

The 2010 AmeriCorps Week, Saturday, May 8 through Saturday, May 15, was successful yet again this year as thousands of individuals participated in hundreds of events throughout the country. AmeriCorps members were recognized through many news articles while multiple Governors and state legislatures officially declared the week across the U.S.

Members and alums celebrated AmeriCorps Week by doing what they do best – service! Projects varied from community beautification to a service rally and everything in between. Members also took the time to thank their community partners and recruit more Americans into service. Millions of Americans learned about AmeriCorps through school presentations, recruitment fairs, service projects, and media coverage during the week.



What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is commonly described as the domestic Peace Corps. Individuals, called members, commit to a specific term of service (usually one year) and are housed in nonprofit organizations, schools, or other agencies. Members range in age from 17 to 70+ years and represent a wide spectrum of other demographics. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn an education award to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans. During their service, members may also be eligible to receive a modest living allowance, health insurance, childcare, and student loan deferment. More than 620,000 AmeriCorps members have helped recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, respond to disasters, and build the capacity of faith-based and community organizations since 1994. Together with the federal initiatives Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America, AmeriCorps is meeting critical needs in communities and promoting civic participation.

Michigan's AmeriCorps Week

2010 Russ Mawby Signature Service Project Impacted the City of Kalamazoo

More than 250 Michigan's AmeriCorps members gathered together on Friday, May 14 and Saturday, May 15 to serve Kalamazoo's Northside Neighborhood and riverfront corridor. As part of the 2010 Russ Mawby Signature Service Project, AmeriCorps members assisted with various community projects and engaged in a large-scale clean-up of the Kalamazoo River. This year's project was designated as Michigan's 2010 AmeriCorps Week closing event. It was a partnership between the Michigan Community Service Commission, Habitat for Humanity of Michigan, and Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity.



Each year AmeriCorps members from across Michigan join together for two days of training, teambuilding, and service. By the end of the second day, several projects are completed, visibly demonstrating the power of Michigan's AmeriCorps members in action.

To read the complete 2010 Signature Service Project recap, [click here](#).

Michigan's AmeriCorps Week Service Projects

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm declared the week of May 8, 2010, as Michigan's AmeriCorps Week. AmeriCorps members from all across Michigan engaged in various service projects as they aimed to "Get Things Done" for their local communities and throughout America.

2010 AmeriCorps Week activities were planned for Detroit, Grand Rapids, Houghton, Jackson, Lansing, Petoskey, and other locations throughout Michigan. Examples of specific projects included:



Fourth Annual Metro Detroit AmeriCorps Celebration – River Rouge

More than 250 Michigan's AmeriCorps members served in Metro Detroit on Monday, May 10. Members provided service to two local schools, cleaned up various community parks, participated in neighborhood clean-ups, painted murals, developed community gardens, hosted a free community carnival, conducted educational workshops, and much more!

Community Garden & AmeriCorps Mural – Grand Rapids

Members of the Cherry Street Community HealthCorps Team collaborated with AmeriCorps*State and VISTA members of Grand Rapids to host a Celebration of

Service Breakfast on Monday, May 10. The event was geared towards educating stakeholders and community leaders about AmeriCorps and national service. Honorable guest and long-time AmeriCorps supporter, U.S. Congressman Vern Ehlers spoke to participants about civic engagement and was recognized for his years of service.

Otsego County Partnership – Gaylord

Huron Pines AmeriCorps members conducted several native plants gardening projects throughout the city of Gaylord and participated in a partnership with Otsego County Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers designed and planted two native plants gardens at Habitat for Humanity homes and helped the Otsego County Conservation District weed and plant areas of the local native plants demonstration garden.

U.P. Recognition Luncheon – Houghton

On May 14th, Superior AmeriCorps hosted a recognition luncheon to celebrate AmeriCorps Week. During the event members thanked the volunteers and sponsors who make their projects possible and highlighted the program's accomplishments of the past year. Following the luncheon a mini service project occurred with participants stuffing "activity kits" to donate to the local hospitals for children waiting in the Emergency Room.

Step Up Lansing – Lansing

On Sunday, May 8, AmeriCorps members and alumni in the greater Lansing area gathered together to host "Step Up Lansing: Get Things Done for Our Community," an event designed to promote national service and challenge city residents to volunteer during the 2010 AmeriCorps Week. The effort offered residents the chance to participate in a number of community service projects at hubs across the area. Each hub focused on different types of projects - beautification, restoration, awareness, conservation, clean-ups, and trainings.



Service Spotlight

To honor the great impact of Michigan's AmeriCorps members across the state – we'd like to share a special story with you from a Michigan Foreclosure Corps AmeriCorps Program member.



My Inspiration from Sargent Shriver

By: Mary Bryson at Lighthouse CDC of Oakland County

My first knowledge of the Peace Corps was in 1962 when a call went out to the general public for volunteers to go to countries in Africa and South America. I thought this would be an excellent opportunity to travel and see the world. Problem was that I possessed little to none of the requirements that were necessary to apply.

I kind of forgot about it until 1964, when my best friend, who was soon-to-be graduate of the University of Michigan, wanted me to drive her to Ann Arbor to hear this "remarkable and dynamic" speaker. She was very adamant about attending and thought I might get something out of it too. I reluctantly gave in and went with her. I took my four-year-old son with me. It was a beautiful day and we enjoyed a meal at Union Station before we went over to the Student Union. I was really surprised to see so many people. It was similar to when John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King spoke in Detroit, except most, if not all, were young people. You

could feel the excitement in the air but I didn't realize what impact this speaker would have on this crowd. Then Sargent Shriver came out and spoke! It was electrifying! I had never heard so many cheers and interruptions of a speech in my life. Mr. Shriver ended with words of encouragement, "each one of you can make a difference in the lives of someone" and challenged each of us to do so. The crowd exploded with a jubilant cheer that seemed to go on forever. Then people started hugging one another and my son was picked up on someone's shoulder and bounced around gleefully with a look of wonderment. For the first time I felt a part of something we all knew was much bigger than each of us individually. Unfortunately, during those days, we lived in a very polarized society, but on that day no one could detect it.

On the way home, all we talked about was what we had just experienced and what could we do to "make a difference." My friend was graduating with a degree in Education; surely she would make a difference in someone's life. I really didn't know where to start, except to help out in the community because I had two small children to take care of. Somehow, that didn't satisfy my need to reach out and really try to make a difference.

Initially I assisted with the Headstart program, Cub Scouts, and did tutorial reading with underrepresented children. The following years, I got involved in the Civil Rights Movement, Voter Registration, Detroit Urban League, local politicians' campaigns, and everything I could to try and make the world a better place for all of us.

I've heard Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Chief Judge Thurgood Marshall speak in political forums and they were very moving; but none of them addressed the issue of **PEACE BUILDING** as forthright as Sargent Shriver. His approach was very simple – practical idealism through friendship. If ever there were a perfect human being, Sargent Shriver is one. It appears that all of his life was devoted to the overall well-being of the human race, the world over. Sometimes I compare Sargent Shriver to a very good parent that wants the best for his children and the best from them.

To this day, I'm still trying to live up to the expectations of Sargent Shriver's call to activism by serving as an AmeriCorps member with the Michigan Foreclosure Corps AmeriCorps Program. Since I've been serving in this capacity, Sargent Shriver's words of "you can make a difference" rings true. As an Outreach Specialist, I've touched an untold number of lives in a positive manner. To be able to perform such a helpful function is most gratifying and satisfying, knowing you're able to help someone sustain their home, thereby helping to stabilize a community. The ripple effect is endless! I'll continue to strive to do the best I can to assist in making the world a better place.

To all the young people out there, we were the original "Yes We Can" group who went on to "**Yes We Did**" as we accomplished the Civil Rights Act, The Women's Rights Act, Voters' Rights, and so very many other social ills which have left a legacy all of us enjoy today. Now it seems we've come full circle and the need to address even more complex issues is prevalent. Remember Sargent Shriver's words, "First hand experience can be quite a teacher. Total involvement is very hard to find in contemporary education, yet it is undoubtedly central to learning . . . it is learning by doing. One way to stand up for your rights is 'service'."

Be of great courage, believe in yourself, apply your knowledge for good, and try to become the best global citizen you possibly can. AmeriCorps is an excellent start!

About the MCSC

The Michigan Community Service Commission builds a culture of service by providing vision and resources to strengthen communities through volunteerism. In 2009-2010, the MCSC is granting more than \$8.5 million in federal and state funds to local communities for volunteer programs and activities. The MCSC funds 19 AmeriCorps programs and 20 Learn and Serve programs. The Governor's Service Awards and Mentor Michigan are also premier programs of the MCSC.