

M I C H I G A N



**COMMUNITY
SERVICE**

COMMISSION

MCSC News

**Building a culture of service by providing vision
and resources to strengthen communities through
volunteerism**

January 2009

In the News

Program Stories

Opportunities

Calendar of Events

In the News

AmeriCorps Alums Marched in Inaugural Parade

AmeriCorps Alums was named as a participant in the 56th U.S. Presidential Inauguration Parade. The Alums selected their parade marchers through a national lottery all registered members were eligible to enter. Among them was Rebecca Marie Cooper-McCann, a former Michigan's AmeriCorps member with the Downriver CARES AmeriCorps program.



The Michigan Community Service Commission was offered the opportunity to purchase the Michigan flag carried by the AmeriCorps Alums in the parade, and will present it to the Governor in the future.

The 2009 Inauguration Parade was held on Tuesday, January 20, on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. More than 100 organizations were selected to march in the parade which honors the newly sworn in President and Vice President.

America's Promise Alliance has Released *Grad Nation*

America's Promise Alliance has released *Grad Nation*, an innovative and comprehensive resource that combines the best evidence-based practices for keeping youths in school. It provides communities with a "road map" featuring the latest research, best practices, and key tools for meeting dropout challenges.

Grad Nation was written by Robert Balfanz, associate professor at the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University; John Bridgeland, president and CEO of Civic Enterprises; Joanna Hornig Fox, Everyone Graduates Center; and Mary McNaugh, Civic Enterprises. The resource received generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

To view *Grad Nation*, **click here.** (www.americaspromise.org/gradnation)

Youth Service America Launches Semester of Service 2009

On January 19 – the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service – Youth Service America (YSA) launched its Semester of Service, a campaign to engage millions of young people across the country in semester-long service-learning programs. The programs will



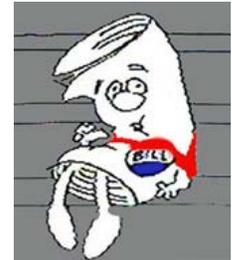
conclude on Global Youth Service Day which is April 24, 2009.

YSA's Semester of Service will provide the framework and tools for students from schools, colleges and universities, youth centers, and faith-based organizations to improve their communities. Semester of Service resources are available online at www.ysa.org/.

- Information courtesy of Youth Service America

Bill to Amend Charitable Organizations and Solicitations Act Passes

The Michigan Legislature has passed a bill to increase the audit threshold for charitable nonprofit organizations, HB 6633. Currently charities with contributions for the most recent fiscal year totaling \$250,000 or more are required to have an annual audit – but due to new American Institute of Certified Public Accountants audit standards, the cost of doing so has increased significantly.



HB 6633 would increase the audit threshold from \$250,000 to \$500,000 and the financial review threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000. The legislation would also provide an automatic increase of \$25,000 to the audit threshold every five years.

The bill now awaits Governor Jennifer M. Granholm's signature to be signed into law.

- Information courtesy of the Michigan Nonprofit Association

MCSC Commissioner Engages in National Center for Family Literacy Donor Event

Michigan Community Service Commissioner and WJR Radio staffer Lloyd Jackson recently helped thank Better World Books for their donation of 6,400 children's books to the National Center for Family Literacy's (NCFL) English Language Learner Family Literacy Programs at three Detroit public elementary schools.



These programs provide adult literacy/ESL, child education, and parenting and parent/child interaction services. NCFL created these programs in 2005 with funding from Toyota, as part of NCFL's nationwide Toyota Family Literacy Program.

Better World Books supports book drives and collects used books and textbooks through a network of more than 1,800 college campuses and partnerships with nearly 1,400 libraries nationwide. To date it has converted 11 million donated books into \$5.2 million in funding for literacy and education. The NCFL is one of its five non-profit Global Literacy Partners.

Western Michigan University Receives Grant to Expand Help for Disadvantaged Youth

A \$6,000 grant to help projects for disadvantaged youth has been awarded to Western Michigan University (WMU). The Michigan Campus Compact Brighter Futures grant will help expand training and outreach in WMU's new Foster Youth and Higher Education Initiative.

This initiative provides full-scholarship tuition, academic help, and counseling to first-time freshmen or transfer students who have "aged out" of foster care. With the help of this grant the initiative will work with Southwest Children's Trauma Assessment Center, Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services, and Disabled Student Resources and Services at WMU to expand current programming.

Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Council Kicks Off New Blog on Service!

Members of the Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Council have created a blog to document their efforts during their year of service. Each week a new entry is posted at <http://miacmembercouncil.blogspot.com/> by a designated member of the Member Council. Topics range from service-related experiences to questions on engaging others in service, and general happenings of the Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Council.

Please visit their blog by **clicking here** (<http://miacmembercouncil.blogspot.com/>) and feel free to post a response!

MCSC Welcomes New Public Relations Director

Chawn Greene-Farmer recently joined the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) as Public Relations (PR) Director to assume a leadership role in developing PR and marketing strategies to support MCSC's mission. Chawn brings to the MCSC global and regional experience that spans strategic planning, communications counseling, public relations, marketing, and organizational development. She has spent the last 10 years crafting and implementing strategies at General Motors, The Auto Club Group, and Mott Children's Health Center. Most recently, Chawn was responsible for leading public relations, organizational development, and marketing efforts to support Mott Children's Health Center's Behavioral Services, Pediatric Dentistry, and Child Health Services programming. Born and raised in Flint, Michigan, Chawn is a graduate of Grand Valley State University and she holds a Master of Arts in Organizational Communications/Public Relations from Wayne State University.



Program Stories

AmeriCorps – When Service Makes a Community Impact

Mike Lyons, a member with the American Red Cross' AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program, has been making quite an impact on Washtenaw County. Through his service with the county's Red Cross chapter, Mike's usual service has been organizing a youth service group called Youth Community Action Team (YCAT) and responding to local disasters. But following an AmeriCorps training session, another opportunity presented itself to him.

The opportunity was called Great Escapes and was originated by an AmeriCorps program in Anchorage, Alaska. The program teaches youth about fire safety and engages local fire departments to expand training – beyond the usual "Stop, Drop, & Roll."

"There had been several children in the area that had died in fires within the past year, from either running back into the house or hiding in a closet," said Mike. "I knew these kids needed to learn about fire safety, so I initiated a Great Escapes program here."

Mike's Great Escapes program is sponsored by the Washtenaw County Chapter of the American Red Cross and uses firefighters from the city of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township departments. Firefighters from both departments attend trainings with Mike at various elementary schools where they teach students several important things about fire safety including multiple exit strategies and a meeting place once you're outside.

"We give them a coloring book and a worksheet to use at home with their families to address these concerns. Then, if they bring their worksheet back to their teacher, they're entered in a drawing to win a prize from the local fire department," explained Mike.

Recently, the raffle winner at Adams School in Ypsilanti received a chauffeured ride home on the Ypsilanti City Fire Department's ladder truck. Other raffle prizes have included the opportunity to participate in "A Day in the Life of a Firefighter."

Mike says the Great Escapes program in Washtenaw County has teamed with 11 area schools to present on fire safety to nearly 2,200 children. They've also distributed more than 5,200 pieces of information about fire safety to those youth. More youth in the area will receive this knowledge even after Mike's AmeriCorps term of service has been completed, as the Red Cross chapter will make Great Escapes an ongoing program.

"This has been one of the best parts of my AmeriCorps service," said Mike. "I've enjoyed working with so many different people and engaging so many community partners – and we're working on projects that truly impact people's lives."

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Establishing a Branch in Tuscola County Submitted by Human Development Commission – Thumb Area RSVP, 2008 Michigan Volunteer Investment Grantee

When entertainer Dolly Parton was growing up in the hills of East Tennessee, she knew her dreams would come true. She knows now that there are children in our local communities whose dreams can be kept alive through reading.

In 1995, Dolly developed a program to provide preschool children with books, free of charge. One book is delivered each month from birth through age five. All preschoolers are eligible. Funding for this project is donated by local champions who average \$30 per child, each year.

In Tuscola County, a group plans to offer Dolly's Imagination Library to the families in their communities. To date, the community representatives involved include the local collaborative body, Michigan State University County Extension, RSVP, Tuscola County Health Department, Tuscola County Literacy Council, Kinship Care, Head Start, Early Head Start, local libraries, post offices, interested citizens, and more.

Although it is in the very early development stages, this initiative will rely heavily on volunteer support. RSVP has provided a Volunteer Leader, and has agreed to offer as many volunteers as needed to perform the tasks necessary to maintain this project. Tasks will include data management, outreach to families, coordination of book delivery, and fund development. Volunteer opportunities that will allow people to use skills of all types and really make a difference in their communities are numerous. While there is much work to do, the results will be well worth the efforts. After all, a child who reads succeeds.

Clarkston Community Schools – A Service-Learning Leader

Clarkston Community Schools have acquired much experience in service-learning, considering they've been a Learn and Serve – Michigan grantee since 2003. During that time they've had plenty of practice incorporating their efforts within their community.

Many of the schools within the district are engaged in service-learning, including Bailey Lake Elementary School. Bailey Lake participates in an annual school-wide Service Learning Day which typically occurs at the end of each school year.

During the 2007-08 school year, the school entitled their service-learning project C.A.T.S. Day – Connecting Academics Through Service.

For the 2008 C.A.T.S. Day, nearly all of Bailey Lake's students participated in efforts to benefit the Oakland County Animal Rescue, Leader Dogs for the Blind, The Detroit Zoo, and other animal focused organizations. The students created homemade pet supplies, conducted a pet supply drive, and raised awareness about pet adoption.



As part of the project Bailey Lake kindergarten students generated cat adoption bags and managed the cat supply drive, first-grade students made dog adoption bags and facilitated the dog supply drive, second-grade students built bird feeders and coordinated a coin drive to furnish a park bench for the community, third graders collected cat toys and conducted a recycled blanket drive, fourth graders baked dog bones and held a bottle slip drive, and the fifth-grade students developed ads for their pet bandanas and operated a fund drive for a community organization.

All of the students' efforts were aligned with their yearly curriculum in at least one of several subject areas including social studies, math, science, or literacy. And, their service helped meet significant community needs by aiding local animals and organizations. Of course, the students' enthusiasm motivated citizens and parents to become actively involved in the school's service-learning projects by helping to coordinate activities and provide supplies.

Bailey Lake Elementary School hopes to capitalize on the success of the 2008 C.A.T.S. Day by conducting the project again in the spring of 2009. The 2008-09 school year will mark the end of Clarkston Community Schools Learn and Serve – Michigan grant. Kathy Noble, a service-learning coordinator at Bailey Lake, says regardless of funding, the school will continue to focus on service in the future.

"We're going to find other ways to secure grant funding," she says. "And we're also going to continue to identify fun and creative ways to ensure our Service Learning Day occurs each year."

Making the Commitment to Mentoring

As a Michigan's AmeriCorps member with Good Samaritan Ministries – Faith in Youth, Jonathan VanWyngarden's service efforts included establishing a mentoring program for children attending Ottawa County middle schools. Little did Jon know the impact his AmeriCorps service focus would have on his own life.



While a student at Hope College in Holland and an AmeriCorps member, Jon helped support the mentoring program South Shore Youth Impact. During his year of service, Jon and another AmeriCorps member, Laura Hahnfeld, helped match students with area youth and provide support to maintain those mentoring relationships. He never actually considered becoming a mentor, until Laura pointed out a certain young male she felt could use a friend like Jon.

"I met AJ about two years ago and he was undergoing some tough times in his life. At the time; his dad was incarcerated, he and his mother had just been evicted and they were living in a hotel. And, he was having trouble committing himself to attending school regularly and so I offered to mentor him," Jon said.

AJ and Jon's mentoring relationship began typically enough, as they engaged in the usual outings of going to the beach or a park, running errands, or attending local sporting events. Although Jon motivated AJ to make school a priority, he also used his service involvement as an opportunity to teach AJ about the importance of helping others. Then, Laura stepped in again to tell Jon and AJ about a unique event.

Laura and her mentee, Tiffany, had participated in the annual Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Run in 2007 and had a wonderful experience training for and completing the race. AJ caught wind of this event and was candid in his desire to participate. In April 2008, Jon and AJ decided to apply and begin training for the run, without knowing if they would be invited to participate. They soon discovered they would be participating in the Mentoring: A Running Start program which invited mentoring matches to run in a 5K race during the Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon festivities in October 2008.

They endured the challenges of training. In fact, there were days when AJ was enthusiastic about their efforts, while on other days he had no interest in running with Jon.

"I would just remind him of our commitment and ask, 'Do you want to go to Detroit? If so, we'll have to work for it.' From that point on we just set small goals," Jon said.

So Jon and AJ continued training until a surprise opportunity arose that could have possibly thwarted their efforts. Jon was offered a position to teach English at a school in Belize for one semester. After much thought and consideration, Jon decided to accept the job following the conclusion of his AmeriCorps service. This decision wasn't made lightly as Jon wanted to fulfill the commitment he and AJ had set to compete in the 5K race in October.

"I made a decision that I would do whatever I could to return in October for the race. I would try and raise enough funds to fly back to Michigan and run alongside AJ in the race," he said.

Through hard work and dedication, Jon was able to fulfill his personal commitment and join AJ in Detroit on October 18 and 19. Together they finished the race and decided to continue their mentoring relationship until Jon moves to Philadelphia to begin student teaching in 2009.

Opportunities

FUNDING

Campus Alcohol Education Program Grants – The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) assists in educating student athletes and creating an environment that promotes healthy choices about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. The CHOICES grant program provides funding for NCAA member institutions and conferences to integrate athletics into efforts to reduce alcohol abuse on college campuses. CHOICES projects must partner athletics with other campus organizations in the development and implementation of effective alcohol education projects. Grants are available up to \$15,000 for the first year, \$10,000 for the second year, and \$5,000 for the third and final year.

Funder: NCAA

Eligibility: NCAA member institutions and conferences

Deadline: February 16

Contact: www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?ContentID=7984

Ben & Jerry's Foundation Social Change Projects – Ben & Jerry's Foundation provides support to nonprofit, grassroots organizations throughout the U.S. that facilitate progressive social change. Grant applicants need to demonstrate their projects will lead to societal, institutional, and/or environmental change; address the root causes of social or environmental problems; and lead to new ways of thinking and acting.

Funder: Ben & Jerry's Foundation

Eligibility: Nonprofit, grassroots organizations

Deadline: Ongoing

Contact: www.benjerry.com/foundation/

Community Improvement Project Assistance from Lowe's - dedicated to improving the communities we serve through support of public education, community improvement projects and home safety initiatives.

Funder: Lowe's

Eligibility: 501(c) (3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations and public agencies in communities where Lowe's operates stores and distribution centers.

Deadline: Ongoing

Contact: www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=frameSet&url=apps.bridgetree.com/funding/default.as

Do Something Plum Grants – Did you recently create a sustainable community action project, program or organization? Do you need \$500 to further the growth and success of your program? If you answered, "YES!", you are eligible to apply for a Plum Youth Grant. Plum grants are given out weekly.

Funder: Do Something.Org

Eligibility: Anyone under the age of 25.

Deadline: Ongoing

Contact: www.dosomething.org/grants

AWARDS

2009 Governor's Service Awards

Volunteers throughout Michigan demonstrate the power of giving and caring every day. Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern invite you to nominate an outstanding volunteer or organization for the 2009 Governor's Service Awards.

Governor's Service Awards nominees are selfless individuals and organizations who mentor and tutor children, provide service to the hungry and homeless, assist the elderly, care for our environment, and much more. Not sure who to nominate? Look around you and you'll see great volunteers in your office, place of worship, and community. They are young people, senior citizens, people with disabilities, educators, national service members...they are your boss, your secretary, your babysitter, your mom, your grandfather, your neighbor, or your best friend.

A celebration will be hosted by Governor Granholm and First Gentleman Mulhern to pay tribute to three finalists in each of the eight categories that demonstrate the diverse nature of volunteers throughout our great state. The event will be in Lansing on June 25, 2009. Nominations must be postmarked by Tuesday, February 24, 2009. For a nomination form, **click here**.

(http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mcsc/MCSC_Nomination_form_2009_260513_7.pdf)

SERVICE

Become a Mentor!

Being a mentor is one of the most important things you can do for a child. If you're interested in gaining more information on becoming a mentor or looking for a local mentoring program, visit the Mentor Michigan website to utilize the program's directory. Mentoring programs can be found by city or county. For more information, **click here**. (<http://www.michigan.gov/mentormichigan/0,1607,7-193--105435--,00.html>)

Calendar of Events

February 9 - 15, 2009

Random Acts of Kindness Week – Nationwide

Contribute to your community, neighbors, friends, family, or a stranger during this annual week of kindness.

For more information, **click here**. (www.actsofkindness.org/)

February 11, 2009

Solutions Summit: Engaging Marginalized Youth – Grand Rapids, MI

The 2009 Solutions Summit will bring together educators and practitioners who work with marginalized youth to learn about service-learning and volunteerism as strategies for youth engagement. For more information, **click here**.

(www.micampuscompact.org/solutions.asp)

February 12 & 13, 2009

13th Annual Institute: Service-Learning and Civic Engagement – Grand Rapids, MI

Join faculty, staff, and administrators from higher education and K-12 institutions across Michigan for a practical, interactive, and stimulating Institute on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. For more information, **click here.** (www.micampuscompact.org/institute.asp)

March 11 – 13, 2009

The Grant Institute's Grants 101: Professional Grant Proposal Writing Workshop – Detroit, MI

This workshop is an intensive and detailed introduction to the process, structure, and skill of professional proposal writing. Participants will become competent program planning and proposal writing professionals following the completion of the Grants 101 course. For more information, **click here.**

(www.thegrantinstitute.com)

March 18 - 21, 2009

20th Annual National Service-Learning Conference: Growing Hope, Cultivating Change – Nashville, TN

The National Youth Learning Council and Volunteer Tennessee invite you to join them in Nashville for the annual Service-Learning conference. The conference is the largest gathering of youths and practitioners involved in the service-learning movement, drawing approximately 2,700 attendees from across the U.S. and at least 20 other countries each year. Through three days of general sessions, featured forums, and service-learning projects, the conference engages participants in local, national, and global issues that service-learning addresses. For more information, **click here.** (www.nylc.org/conference)

May 5 & 6, 2009

Michigan Nonprofit SuperConference – Dearborn, MI

Save the date for the 2009 SuperConference! This annual event for Michigan nonprofits will feature national keynote speakers, more than 50 workshops on relevant topics, exhibits from services and product suppliers, multiple networking opportunities, and an on-site bookstore. For more information, **click here.**

(www.mnaonline.org/Conf2009/)

May 9 – 16, 2009

AmeriCorps Week 2009

The third annual AmeriCorps Week provides the perfect opportunity for AmeriCorps members, alums, grantees, program partners, and friends to shine a spotlight on the work done by members—and to motivate more Americans to serve their communities. Many events are being planned across the country. Individuals and organizations with a special interest in AmeriCorps—especially, members, programs, and alums—are encouraged to use their creativity to mark the week in any way they see fit. For more information, **click here.**

(www.americorpsweek.gov)

June 22 – 24, 2009

National Conference on Volunteering & Service – San Francisco, CA

Mark your calendars to attend the largest gathering in the world of volunteer and civic leaders. At this annual event learn from volunteer and service experts from across the country, connect with volunteer leaders, nonprofit organizations, corporate and government partners, and be inspired by the City by the Bay and its innovative practices. For more information, **click here.** (www.volunteeringandservice.org)

June 25, 2009

2009 Governor's Service Awards – Lansing, MI

Volunteers throughout Michigan demonstrate the power of giving and caring every day. The annual Governor's Services Awards is a celebration, hosted by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern, which pays to volunteers or organizations who are making a difference in the state's communities. For more information, **click here.** (www.michigan.gov/mcsc)