

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**

July 2008

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In the News



ServiceNation, A Campaign for National Service, Is Up and Running in Michigan!

The ServiceNation campaign aims to lead the passage of dramatic new service legislation, creating opportunities for Americans to serve at every key life-stage as a strategy for addressing critical challenges in communities. The campaign will also look to create a Declaration of Service which will serve as a blueprint for creating a true nation of service. The campaign will launch with a ServiceNation Summit, Sept. 11-12 in New York City, bringing hundreds of influential leaders together to draft the Declaration and form ServiceNation's policy process. The campaign then picks up steam with a Day of Action on September 27th, which will call on you, your neighbors, friends, and family to join in this citizen movement and make it a success!

Throughout the country this summer, 30 "Change Agents" are working to mobilize and engage citizens by empowering them in creating Day of Action events and collecting signatures on a Declaration of Service in different communities. Michigan is home to two of these Change Agents, Shirley Berry, of Detroit, and Jade Seelye, of Sault Ste Marie. If you are interested in being a part of the ServiceNation campaign, contact Jade Seelye at jseelye@bethechangeinc.org or visit www.servicenation.org.

Senate Appropriations FY 2009 Funding for CNCS

The numbers for the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2009 have been released by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill provides \$888,462,000 for the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs.

As part of the National and Community Service Act the committee recommends over \$271 million for AmeriCorps grants, over \$132 million for the National Service Trust, over \$37 million for Learn and Serve America, and over \$11 million for State Commission Grants. For the Domestic Volunteer Service Act the committee recommends nearly \$94 million for AmeriCorps VISTA and over \$213 million for Senior Corps.

The bill now goes to the full Senate for consideration. The House Appropriations Committee will take up their version of the Labor-HHS-Education bill following the July 4th recess.

- Information courtesy of the Corporation for National and Community Service

The H.E.A.R.T. Act Helps AmeriCorps Members with Disabilities

On June 17th President Bush signed into law H.R. 6081, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008. The act makes AmeriCorps more accessible to people with disabilities, directing the Social Security

Administration to ignore an individual's receipt of AmeriCorps benefits for purposes of Social Security income eligibility. Prior to this act, receiving an AmeriCorps living allowance could disqualify an individual from eligibility. The H.E.A.R.T. Act will take effect for benefits payable after August 16, 2008, regardless of the status of the AmeriCorps member.

Governor Granholm Honors Michigan Volunteers

On June 19th, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm presented awards to individuals and organizations for their exemplary volunteer service at the 2008 Governor's Service Awards event, *An Evening with the Stars*, held at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. A total of 11 awards were handed out with over 40 finalists also recognized. To find out about this year's winners, visit www.michigan.gov/mcsc.

Passage of House Bill 5910 by Michigan's Legislature Will Expedite Volunteer Approval

House Bill 5901, introduced into the House of Representatives by State Representative Robert Dean, amends the Child Protection Law. The bill would allow any potential volunteer, mentor, or employee to request their own clearance from Michigan's Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry, and give permission for the Department of Human Services to send the clearance directly to an agency. This will help programs (such as mentoring organizations or AmeriCorps) by removing restrictions of who has access to this information, and will also speed up the process. Individuals can ask to have the clearance sent directly to the organization where he or she is planning to volunteer or seek employment.

HB 5910 was passed by the House on May 1; it now goes to the Senate Committee on Families and Human Services for consideration.

AmeriCorps National Direct Competitive Grants Fund Two Michigan Programs

The Corporation for National and Community Service has approved grant applications for two organizations in Michigan for 2008 AmeriCorps grants.

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services/Arab-American Resource Corps was approved for \$911,000. ACCESS AmeriCorps members are placed with Arab American community-based organizations to engage in social service delivery, cultural outreach, and new immigrant orientation. The program is based in Dearborn.

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee/The Asset-Based Community Development Corps was approved for \$319,880. The Christian Reformed World Relief committee AmeriCorps members will engage community residents in discovering the resources and assets already in their community; convening community stakeholders to create a community agenda for change; engaging community stakeholders in a process of offering their time, talents, and resources to accomplish the community agenda for change; and evaluating and reporting on the progress achieved in making the requested community changes. The program is based in Grand Rapids.

MCSC Employee Sergeant Major Garry Gross Serving in Iraq

Another State of Michigan employee has left for the front lines in the war on terrorism. On May 5, Gary and the 1/26th Press Camp Public Affairs Unit, based in Ft. Custer, Michigan, arrived for their one-year combat tour in Baghdad, Iraq. The mission of the 1/26th Press Camp involves media support and requires the efforts of roughly 30 soldiers whose duties include broadcast journalism, journalism, photography, and various administrative and support functions. In addition to being responsible for this unit, Garry is the Director of Finance for the Michigan Community Service Commission.

Garry and his unit received the Unit Combat Patch on June 6. This patch is awarded to units participating in a combat zone for 30 consecutive days.

Program Stories



Charlevoix Service-Learning Students Loan Skills to Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

Charlevoix High School Construction Technology teacher Brian Certa probably didn't know what he got himself into when he wrote a letter to Extreme Makeover: Home Edition applauding the goals of the show and tentatively offering assistance in the future.

On Tuesday, March 4, Certa got a call to bring four of his seniors down to New Orleans, Louisiana, to assist the show in building a house and church previously destroyed by Hurricane Katrina during the season finale. From March 6 through the 14 CHS Construction Program and Learn & Serve students Kyle Jones, Cliff Jones, Nathan Tripplehorn, and Corey Gotshall assisted with framing, installing doors, sheeting, wrapping, and landscaping.

Certa says the students were initially only assigned to framing but thanks to their skill levels they were quickly called upon for a variety of tasks.

"Volunteers were divided into skilled and unskilled. These young men were in their fourth year of Charlevoix High School's Construction Program so they easily qualified to wear the "skilled" badges giving them access to all project sites. Throughout these four years they've definitely gained the knowledge and skills necessary for the projects."

Then it was just a matter of putting those skills to work – and they certainly did. Throughout the week the group of young men became widely known among all the show's volunteers. In fact, Certa says by the end of the week they were receiving offers of internships and jobs with large building companies from North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee.

Despite the work experiences and networking opportunities, Certa believes this trip also summed up the value of service-learning.

"[Service-learning] stretches their boundaries outside of school walls and allows students to recognize the need for education and how useful it is in the real world. Focusing on the needs of others is an eye-opening experience for many young people and transforms them into more thoughtful and compassionate beings."

Learn & Serve – Michigan funds assisted with transportation and housing costs for the CHS students and Certa.



Michigan Man Named 2008 National Big Brother of the Year

Many years ago Lloyd Kaper was matched with a young boy through Big Brothers Big Sisters, A Community of Caring in Kalamazoo. Now, 10 years later, Kaper has been recognized for his mentoring efforts as the 2008 National Big Brother of the Year.

Kaper, a self-employed manufacturing components salesman, hails from Hamilton and has a family of his own. But through his church and a general concern for the well-being of local children he decided to get involved in

mentoring.

"There are so many children in need. Right now the average wait for a little brother to be matched with a big

brother is horrendous. If you're 6 or 7-years-old, could you imagine how it would feel to wait over nine months for a mentor? I feel a lot more people have to get involved to recognize this need for help."

Kaper is matched with Christopher Walto, now a 16-year-old sophomore at Hamilton High School. The two have built quite a bond over the past 10 years through arrowhead hunting, vehicle maintenance, and sailing. Their relationship is so strong Walto doesn't doubt they'll still be matched following his high school graduation.

Both Kaper and Walto were honored June 24 at the Big Brothers Big Sisters National Conference held in St. Louis. They both had the opportunity to speak to the massive crowd in attendance and received a trophy in their honor. Kaper says award recognition has not been his motivation for mentoring. But he does believe this opportunity further highlights the need for these relationships.

"It's not really for Christopher and I, the recognition, it's to get more people involved. That's where we feel the value lies."

Kaper says Big Brothers Big Sisters are preventative action-type programs that look to get involved with children when they're young and impressionable.

"We have a big opportunity to help them get on the right track but that opportunity doesn't last very long. If no one pays attention to them they'll grow into their late teens where the die has been cast for the rest of their lives."

Iowa Disaster Getting Help from Red Cross AmeriCorps Members

At least 10 Michigan's AmeriCorps members from the American Red Cross have devoted their services in response to the recent severe flooding experienced in Iowa. Red Cross AmeriCorps members receive disaster assistance training and are well prepared to answer the call to service when disasters strike.

Jordan O'Neil, AmeriCorps program director for the American Red Cross of West Central Michigan, says those 10 members have been asked to make a three week commitment in Iowa where they put in 12-hour days, for seven days a week.

Their main service duties include working on client case work, which involves meeting one-on-one with disaster families or individuals and providing them with immediate assistance and financial assistance. The AmeriCorps members have also been working to help victims with shelter and feeding concerns. O'Neil says Red Cross AmeriCorps members' general service duties are to respond to local disasters, but they are often called to different locations nationally, depending on the circumstances surrounding the disasters.

"When we recruit our members we try to encourage them or inspire them to dedicate a year of their life to the service of others. Three weeks is an incredible commitment to make when you're given a 24-hour notice. If you're planning a three-week vacation you probably planned three months ago. If you're leaving for three weeks for disaster assistance you have about 15-hours to get your affairs in order," he says.

The Corporation for National and Community Service has also responded to the severe Iowa flooding by making 230 AmeriCorps VISTA positions immediately available. The VISTA members have been asked to recruit and manage volunteers and provide coordination and leadership to assist low-income individuals and communities in recovering from the disaster. They will also be assisting with piling sandbags, running shelters and hotlines, and supporting evacuees.

Students Gone Wild

Have you ever participated in a live auction? The silence is golden for just a moment with the only voice you can hear being that of the auctioneer!

The mentees went wild when they saw the items up for auction on May 13th at Oak Park Preparatory Academy. iPod shuffles, movie passes, DVDs, TV's, mp3 players, and gift cards were just a few of the larger items donated by individuals for this purpose.

Our Faces of the Future mentoring program rewards students with "gas cash", which is fake money collected by students over the first semester. Students are matched 3 to 1 with an adult mentor and mentored as a larger facilitated group. The materials used are Winning Futures' "Road to Success" workbooks. Some of the ways students receive gas cash are through perfect attendance, grade improvements, stand and share, arriving to mentoring session on time, being attentive, and participating in the group.

Upon completion of Phase I the students have the opportunity to participate in a live auction, making purchases with the gas cash they received. As the auctioneer began to auction items the students began to put up their auction cards and get loud and excited about the items that were up for bid, truly a must see event. There was also a dollar store section set up the students enjoyed shopping in. They were able to purchase items ranging from fancy ink pens to handheld video games.

This event was a great success because the students not only understood the value of money, but they understood that hard work definitely pays off.

**Oak Park Business & Education Alliance
2008 Volunteer Investment Grantee**

Opportunities

Awards

Michigan Nonprofit Champion Award

Nominations are being sought for the Michigan Nonprofit Association's Nonprofit Champion Award, to be awarded at the annual Nonprofit Day on September 24th, 2008 in Lansing. The award recognizes public servants who have demonstrated extraordinary work in support of the nonprofit sector and the communities nonprofits serve. Nominations are due by Monday, August 4th. Visit www.mnaonline.org for a nomination form.

Funding

\$3.5 Million to Serve Disadvantaged Youth

The Corporation for National and Community Service has announced plans to make \$3.5 million in grants to national organizations supporting youth from disadvantaged circumstances. CNCS anticipates providing at least two grants. The first, for around \$2.5 million, would go to a nonprofit organization best demonstrating its plan and ability to mobilize volunteers, identify resources, and support other youth-serving organizations. The second grant of approximately \$1 million would support a national nonprofit organization bringing volunteers and other community resources into local schools on a national scale. National nonprofit organizations that have ongoing, demonstrable relationships with youth-serving organizations or public school systems in at least 10 states are eligible to apply. The application deadline is 5 p.m. EST on July 29.

Jobs

Mobilize the Polls

Mobilize.org has announced the *Mobilize the Polls Program*, which aims to recruit 500 poll workers under the age of 30 for the 2008 Presidential Election. This election year, while youth are coming out to the polls in record numbers, they also have the opportunity to contribute to their fellow citizens' enjoyment of the

democratic process by volunteering to be a poll worker. If you are interested in serving as a poll worker and are an eligible voter, email your name and Congressional District to Katelyn@mobilize.org.

Calendar of Events

July 25 – 27, 2008

2008 Service & Leadership Camp: Serve it Up! – Holly, MI

At the Youth Service Leadership Camp participants will join students from across Michigan to take service and service-learning to the next level in schools throughout the state. Activities for the weekend include team building, leadership opportunities, service projects, and networking. For more information contact Angelia Salas at salas@michigan.gov.

August 18 – 21, 2008

Michigan Merit Curriculum Initiative – Ionia, MI

These four days will be spent planning service learning units that allow students to acquire transferable knowledge through a deep understanding of content and mastery level of skills – a must for service-learning professionals! For more information contact Deborah Wagner at 616-522-1405.

August 25 & 26, 2008

Connecting Literacy to Service Learning – Brighton, MI

This two-day exploration will give every participant the tools they need to integrate service-learning's unique teaching methodology into their everyday instruction. Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*, will be the keynote speaker. Call 810-632-6863 for more information.

September 11 & 12, 2008

ServiceNation Summit – New York City, NY

The ServiceNation Summit is designed to spark an energetic and meaningful national conversation about the power and potential to unite all Americans in the fight to address our greatest unmet social needs. Participants will craft and endorse a Declaration Of Service that will lay out a compelling case for dramatically expanding service opportunities for all Americans. For more information visit www.bethechangeinc.org.

September 24, 2008

Nonprofit Day 2008 – Lansing, MI

This annual conference put on by the Michigan Nonprofit Association promotes relevant issues and concerns of the nonprofit sector. More details will be available in the future. For more information contact Erin Skene or Tiffany Aurora at 517-492-2400.

September 27, 2008

ServiceNation “Day of Action” – Nationwide

The ServiceNation Day of Action is about mobilizing communities on a national scale to demonstrate the impact service has upon our country and the power of citizens to mobilize and to create large scale change. ServiceNation hopes to see events all across the country and encourages participants to register their events online. To do so or learn more visit www.bethechangeinc.org/servicenation/day_of_action.

October 2 & 3, 2008

Team Up Michigan! Setting the Pace for National Service – Big Rapids, MI

A cross-stream conference for Michigan National Service Program staff. Join your colleagues from Michigan's AmeriCorps, Learn & Serve, National Direct, Senior Corps, and VISTA programs for two motivational days of networking, training, and collaboration. More details will be available in the future. For more information contact Angelia Salas at salasa@michigan.gov or Megan Sargent at sargentm1@michigan.gov.

October 6 – 12, 2008

Learn and Serve Challenge

Join your peers from around the country for a concentrated week of special events and community outreach activities designed to raise awareness and build support for service-learning. For more information visit www.learnandservechallenge.org/.

October 20, 2008

Dropout Prevention Summit – Lansing, MI

America's Promise Alliance is supporting more than 100 state and local Dropout Prevention Summits across the country in the next two years. Every governor has been invited to host a statewide summit and Governor Granholm has responded with a summit planned for Michigan. These summits are intended to build a sense of urgency around the dropout crisis, secure a commitment to action from leaders in all sectors, and to result in action plans that strengthen current efforts and initiate new strategic activity around measurable policy and program supports for young people. For more information visit www.americaspromise.org.

November 13, 2008

Poverty Summit – Statewide

This first-time one-day event will organize the fight to eliminate poverty and provide help to Michigan families in financial crisis. "Voices for Action: The 2008 Poverty Summit" will bring together activists, leaders, and families to share strategies and develop new networks to fight poverty and provide help to Michigan families. For more information visit www.michigan.gov/poverty.

November 17, 2008

Mentor Michigan Statewide Conference – Lansing, MI

Mentor Michigan will host its third annual conference where Michigan mentoring professionals are invited to spend the day interacting with leading authorities as they share and discuss best practices, quality enhancement, and other valuable topics. More details will be available in the future. For more information contact Amber Reiss at reissa@michigan.gov.

November 18, 2008

Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Celebration – East Lansing, MI

This annual event brings Michigan's AmeriCorps*State, VISTA, and National Direct members for a day of training, speakers, teambuilding, and festivities. Included in the celebration is a swearing-in ceremony and reaffirmation of members' commitment to AmeriCorps and national service. For more information contact Michelle Mackie at metzmakerm1@michigan.gov.

About MCSC

The Michigan Community Service Commission builds a culture of service by providing vision and resources to strengthen communities through volunteerism. In 2007-08, the MCSC is granting more than \$5.9 million in federal and state funds to local communities for volunteer programs and activities. The MCSC is funding 19 AmeriCorps programs, 23 Learn and Serve programs, and 13 Volunteer Investment Grant recipients. The Governor's Service Awards and Mentor Michigan are also premier programs of the MCSC.