



2012 Russ Mawby Signature Service Project

Michigan's AmeriCorps Members "Got Things Done!" May 18 & 19, 2012: Traverse City, Michigan

More than 300 Michigan's AmeriCorps*State, National, and VISTA members gathered in Traverse City for the annual Russ Mawby Signature Service Project. AmeriCorps members assisted with various community projects and worked with several organizations to make a significant impact on the Grand Traverse region.



The event began with an inspiring kickoff at Camp Arbutus where AmeriCorps members heard from Paula Kaiser VanDam from the Michigan Community Service Commission, Michael Estes, Mayor of Traverse City, Connor Miller, an AmeriCorps*VISTA alum working on the Grand Vision initiative, and Sarna Salzman, executive director of SEEDS. Members were then divided into teams and traveled to a variety of project sites where they assisted with trail building, community garden development, tree planting, a Habitat for Humanity build, and more.



Throughout the two days of service, Michigan's AmeriCorps members received encouraging words from other special guests, including Michigan Community Service Commission Chair Carolyn Bloodworth. The 2012 Russ Mawby Signature Service Project also served as the official closing event for the 2012 Michigan's AmeriCorps Week, which took place May 12-19. AmeriCorps Week is a recruitment and recognition event designed to bring more Americans into service, salute AmeriCorps members and alums for their powerful impact, and thank the community partners who make AmeriCorps possible.

This year's Signature Service Project was a partnership between the Michigan Community Service Commission, Conservation Resource Alliance, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Habitat for Humanity Grand Traverse Region, SEEDS, Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, United Way of Northwest Michigan, and Elemental Media. The Signature Service Project is an annual event that serves a different community each year.

Celebrate Service! Event

This year's project included a special Friday evening event that was open to the community. Sponsored by local nonprofits and businesses to honor Michigan's AmeriCorps members, the event featured a volunteer fair and live music by the band "Steppin In It." It was a great way to kick off the summer and celebrate service and volunteerism!



Fun 2012 Signature Service Project Facts!

On May 18 and 19, more than 300 participants – including AmeriCorps members, alums, and community volunteers – accomplished the following:

- Built, maintained, and improved more than 6,855 feet of new trail at the Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area, Grand Traverse Commons, and Optimist Club.
- Picked more than 1,800 gallons of garlic mustard in the Glacial Hills Pathway, clearing more than six forested acres of the invasive species.
- Planted 100 black willow saplings to prevent soil erosion near a river at the Grand Traverse Commons.
- Rebuilt a donated cedar garden shed on the SEEDS Farm for tool storage and shade.
- Prepared a local and organic feast for 350 participants at the *Celebrate Service!* event.
- Assembled six wheelchair-accessible raised bed planters for distribution in the community.
- Assisted with a Habitat for Humanity home build and served in the Habitat ReStore, sorting through and cleaning out four dumpsters of bad merchandise.
- Stripped and repainted playground equipment at Crystal Lake Elementary School, including seven basketball hoops and more.
- Dug post holes on 450 feet of fence line and set 80 posts in preparation for the arrival of horses at the YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camp.
- Cleared five acres of forest brush to make Camp Arbutus safer for youth staying there.
- Removed 600 feet of old fence and fence posts at the Flowing Wells property in Kalkaska to create approximately 30 turtle basking structures and amphibian cover in the restored wetlands.
- Contributed more than 2,700 hours of service as a group.

Members also completed projects at the Goodwill Homeless Shelter and Food Drive, a city park in Frankfort, and two additional schools in the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District. For more information on the annual Russ Mawby Signature Service Project, visit www.mi-ssp.com.



A special thanks to the sponsors of this year's project, without whom the event would not have been possible: Cherry Republic, Consumers Energy, DTE Energy, Fifth Third Bank, Hagerty Insurance, and Sam's Club, with assistance from Great Lakes Potato Chip Company, Meijer and Pepsi.



The Michigan Community Service Commission builds a culture of service by providing vision and resources to strengthen communities through volunteerism. Michigan's AmeriCorps is similar to a domestic Peace Corps. AmeriCorps programs are housed within nonprofit organizations, schools, and other agencies throughout the state. Individuals, called members, tutor and mentor children, help the homeless, improve health care, protect the environment, and more. In 2011-12, Michigan's AmeriCorps members will provide more than one million hours of service and recruit approximately 19,000 volunteers.